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The Black Schooner; or, Jib Junk, the Old Tar.

BY ROGER STARBUCK,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY CAPTAIN," ETC., ETC.



A HAND GRASPING ONE OF THE LEGS OF HIS PANTS, JERKED HIM QUICKLY OFF HIS FEET.

The Black Schooner;

OR,

Jib Junk, the Old Tar.

BY ROGER STARBUCK,

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CHAPTER I.

CAST ASHORE.

OH, papa, it will strike on the reef!"

"I am afraid so, Bertha. Heaven help those two men!"

The first speaker, a maiden of eighteen, clung trembling to the arm of her father—a tall, gray-haired, benevolent-looking missionary, past middle age.

Attired in white, with flowing sash about her waist, a broad-rimmed straw hat on her head, and her dark hair blown far out from her sloping shoulders and hollow back, the girl was a fine specimen of the grace and beauty of young womanhood. The skin was of a transparent white, with the exception of the pure rose-color on the smooth, oval cheeks, while the eyes, being of a dark brown, gave to the face that peculiar expression natural to such a complexion.

Ever since her fourth year, this girl had resided with John Malden—her father's name—on the island where she now stood—one of the two situated within thirty miles of the Feejees, in the South Pacific Ocean.

At the present moment a heavy gale was raging. The dark clouds, torn here and there by the roaring blast, seemed to sweep the very tops of the huge seas, as they came booming along over a coral reef running parallel with this side of the island, and distant from it about a mile.

The object to which Bertha and her father had alluded was a boat, containing two men, who had long been vainly endeavoring to clear the island shore, toward which wind and wave were rapidly carrying them.

The forms of these two men now were visible through the storm-rack. Seated at the tiller, one of them, attired in a blue cap and a coat with gilt buttons, evidently was a naval officer, the other a common seaman. Both, in spite of their perilous situation, seemed to conduct themselves with the utmost composure, the man, every time the boat rolled its gunwales under, bailing it with mathematical regularity and studied precision, while the officer remained motionless at his post, except when his arms moved to keep the boat's head to the sea.

"There!" cried Malden, at last—"there they go!"

The officer, as a huge sea lifted his boat, whirling it toward the rocks, had evidently hoped to clear the latter, but, unfortunately, the sea broke ere it crossed the reef and the frail boat was dashed to pieces.

Bertha, who had placed both hands over her eyes, to shut out the sight, now ran toward the beach, followed by her father, who called on a group of natives, not far distant, to stand by to help him rescue the two seamen, should they be swept ashore. The native islanders, strong, well-built fellows, came at the bidding of the missionary, their tawny skins naked to the waist and partially tattooed, their long black hair flowing, their eyes agleam with the wild expression of half-tamed natures. As they waved their long spears and war-clubs and set up their discordant yelling, meant to encourage the poor fellows, who might be struggling at that time to gain the beach, they seemed like demons of the storm, issuing their commands to winds and waves.

At length a sea, heavier than any which had yet rolled in, was seen booming over the reef, sweeping along toward the party.

Malden seized his daughter's hand to draw her out of reach of the coming wall of waters; but, being an elderly man, his movements were slow; perceiving which, a tall, swarthy native, with arms of tremendous length, and Herculean breast, sprang to Bertha's side, caught her up, and bounded away with her to a rise of land sufficiently distant to save her from a wetting.

At first the girl was indignant; but she reflected that the man's intention had been good. Nevertheless, she reprimanded him.

The native frowned and grinned, at the same time showing a brilliant set of white teeth. There was in his eyes an expression of admiration that Bertha did not like.

"Must quicken move!" said he. "Darko had no time to take hand!"

To this she made no reply, for her attention

was now drawn to the figures of the two seamen visible through the mist spray about the top edges of the coming sea, as it struck the beach.

The party nearest the beach were completely drenched; but, with a strong gripe, four of the natives caught the two castaway seamen, and holding firmly, with bodies drawn back and feet braced in the ground, they prevented them and themselves from being drawn back by the wave as it receded. The others having saved themselves in a similar manner, all were soon gathered about the two rescued sailors, who lay senseless, yet showing signs of recovery, on the soft grass, to which they had by this time been taken.

CHAPTER II.

THE CASTAWAYS.

ONE of the two sailors, the naval officer, was a young and strikingly handsome man of twenty-five—a first lieutenant, as his uniform betokened. The other person was evidently a foremast hand—a low-sized man, with an extraordinary breadth of shoulders and chest, the width of the upper part of his body contrasting singularly with the lower—the hips being very narrow, and the feet small, so that, when standing, he must have presented something the appearance of an inverted cone. The square head and face, the clear, sea blue eyes, the ropy, grayish locks, hanging down his temples, the stumpy nose, more resembling a plug of wood than a nose, and the short upper lip, suggestive of a constant habit of chewing tobacco—a cud of which, throughout his late peril, he had retained in his right cheek—were such as we often notice in men of his age and calling. He lay gasping on his back, blinking through his half-opened eyes at three natives, who were peering into his face. One of these was Darko, who now shook the old tar.

"Hey! how feel now?"

"Rub his temples! chafe them! Turn him over so that the salt water will run out of his throat!" cried Malden, who, with his daughter's assistance, was performing these operations on the young officer.

Two of the natives rolled over on his belly the seaman, who, as they did so, gave a grunt like a cow-fish.

The natives answered with a hoarse squeal of surprise, caused by the remarkable appearance of the old sailor's buttocks, which unlike most people were as flat as a codfish. This appearance was rendered all the more apparent by a large canvas patch neatly sewed on the seat of his pants, and covered with a coat of blue paint, probably both to correspond with the blue color of the trowsers, and to enable him to keep dry that useful part of his body when seated on a wet deck, gun-carriage, or topsail yard.

So intent were the astonished natives on discussing and inspecting this unexpected phenomenon of flatness, that they forgot to carry out the directions of Malden.

"Hookie! hee! never see so before!" cried Darko.

"Tink been cut off!" remarked another.

"But how cut off?"

Meanwhile, Bertha had gone to her little habitation, a few yards distant, to bring a bottle of brandy, which she now presented to Malden, who put the neck between the lips of the young officer. The liquor revived him so that he raised himself on his elbow and glanced round him, with a bewildered air.

"Here, give the other some of this brandy," said Malden, passing the bottle to Darko.

The old sailor, who had hitherto remained nearly motionless, suddenly lifting that part of his body which the puzzled islanders had been so closely examining, "bumped" them over backward, and rose to his knees.

"Ay, the brandy, you black-skins," he growled; "pass the grog!"

And, snatching the bottle from Darko's hand, he held it so long to his mouth that Malden was compelled to interpose.

"Hold, there!" he exclaimed. "Not quite so fast, my friend. This other gentleman must have some more."

At the words "other gentleman," the old sailor, for the first time since being cast ashore, perceived the young officer, who, surrounded by his assistants, had hitherto been screened from his sight.

A deep flush swept over his sun-embrowned face; he hung his head, and rolled his tobacco quid from side to side.

"Beg pardon, sir; didn't think! Hope the grog'll bring you back to life, lieutenant, as it has me!"

And he sprang to his feet.

The lieutenant smiled faintly.

"Let the poor fellow have my share," he said to Malden. "I am very well as I am."

"What is your name, my man?" said Malden to the old sailor.

"Jobe Junk, at your sarvice. My mates called me Jib, for short, sir. The lieutenant's name is Elmore."

The lieutenant had now risen. At first he seemed weak, but he was evidently a man of strong, hardy frame, for, bracing himself, he walked over to Mr. Malden and shook his hand, thanking him for his kindness. Then he glanced toward the reef, as if looking for some sign of the lost boat.

Bertha watched him intently. He had interested her from the first. His handsome, manly form and face had appealed to her woman's heart, exciting therein sensations entirely new to this young girl, who seldom saw other specimens of the opposite sex than the tawny, dusky natives of the island.

The lieutenant had evidently been deeply impressed by the beauty of the young woman. More than once, since his recovery, his fine eyes had expressed the admiration she excited, bringing warm blushes to her modest cheeks, and causing the long lashes to droop.

As to Jib Junk, with hands thrust under his waistband, and legs astraddle like a pair of open compasses, he stood, flinging roving glances all about him, in an inspection of his new quarters.

The natives had glided round behind him, where they stood again inspecting and commenting on the flatness of a certain part of his person.

"Avast, there!" cried Jib, suddenly turning upon them. "I see your curiosity is excited. It was a cut with a cutlass from a pirate, blast him, made me that way."

The natives, not quite understanding, Jib good-naturedly explained how, while he was fighting with a pirate, the freebooter, with his weapon, had taken the flesh from him in that quarter of his body, thereby giving it its present flat appearance.

The missionary was now proceeding, with his daughter and the lieutenant, toward his humble habitation, and Jib hastened to follow, walking something after the manner of a duck.

Mr. Malden's house was a small stone building, containing three rooms. The stone-work had originally been that of a fort, which, when Malden arrived there, he found partially demolished.

The natives stated that the fort had been built by pirates years before, to ward off the attacks of their people, who wished to drive them from the island. Whether the story were true or false, mattered little to Malden, for whom, with a few boards added to the stone-work, the carpenter of the ship in which he had taken passage soon made him a dwelling neat and comfortable enough for that part of the world.

From the sloping roof, well covered with tarred canvas, which made it perfectly waterproof, a good strong pipe projected through an opening, in lieu of a chimney.

It had on each side two large openings, which served for windows, and having strong wooden shutters, could be closed at any time. In front was the door, opening upon a beautiful, sloping lawn, shaded by bread-fruit trees, by which the house was nearly surrounded, and which afforded a grateful shade in this warm clime. Added to this convenience was the luxury of the sea-breeze, which, as the house stood on a rising piece of land, was inhaled day and night by the inmates.

The rooms contained but little furniture. Three or four chairs, a walnut table, a writing-desk, half a dozen lithographs, and a chestful of books, with cutlery and crockery enough to enable one or two persons to dine in a "civilized" manner, were all the articles the good man had thought necessary to burden himself with, for such distant removal.

The pictures had been neatly hung on the walls of the front room, and the books arranged on home-made shelves in the same apartment, the floor of which was covered by neat cocoanut matting, woven by skillful fingers of the island women, assisted by Bertha.

The lieutenant followed the missionary and his daughter into this room, but Jib stood deferentially and silently outside until Mr. Malden kindly bade him come in. Even then, the old tar hesitated, feeling that he was still under the orders of the lieutenant, who had not yet spoken.

"Come in, of course," said the young officer; "it is for the best, and not for me to say who shall enter his abode."

Thus reassured, Jib rolled in, and on the seat

Bertha had put out for him, he placed himself in such a peculiar manner, missing the plunging and rolling of the craft, to which he had so long been accustomed, that the chair, creaking, went over on its edge, almost precipitating him sideways.

Soon the lieutenant and Malden were talking over the late accident. The young officer stated that his vessel, the *Dauntless*, was a small brig of ten guns, with a crew of fifty men. On the day before, lying off and on an island about ten miles to the northward, the captain had sent him, with Jib Junk, in the boat, to make inquiries of the natives about a pirate they were in search of, called "The Flying Wake," which had formerly cruised among the West India Islands, but which, since the frequent attacks made upon the lawless sea-robbers in that quarter, had gone round Cape Horn, and was now supposed to be cruising somewhere in this neighborhood.

The lieutenant sailing from point to point of the island, made inquiries of the different natives, but he could obtain no information. He then started on his return for the brig, distant about six miles on his present tack, but ere he had made half the distance, the wind came on to blow a perfect hurricane, while the brig, almost shut out from his view by the rack of the storm, was soon driven out of sight. As the wind was blowing off the island, he could not return to it, but he was carried dead before it. The gale continued all through the night, but the two men could do nothing but allow themselves to be carried on, keeping their boat's head to the sea, as she must otherwise have been swamped. At daylight they beheld, ahead of them, the island on which they now were, and off which, as shown, they lost their boat, the gale having driven them on with such rapidity that they had been unable to clear the land.

"So you see," said the lieutenant, glancing toward his man, "this, so far, is the result of my cruise and Jib Junk's after The Flying Wake. You have not seen any suspicious-looking craft hereabout, sir, have you?" he inquired, noticing that his auditor suddenly became thoughtful.

"Well—no," said the latter, hesitatingly. "I think not."

"How?" queried the young officer, with all the eagerness of his calling, his eyes alight with the expression of one who thinks he is about to hit upon a clue.

"I said I thought not. Two or three nights ago, I saw the light of some vessel, gliding past the island at the distance of a league. Next morning a schooner put in here for water."

"A schooner! What sort of people were her crew?" inquired the young man, eagerly; "and did you notice how the craft was painted?"

"I did. The men were stout fellows, but they performed their work in silence. Only the officer in charge of them spoke, addressing to me a question in broken English, and issuing his orders to his boat's crew in German. But one boat's crew came ashore."

The lieutenant's countenance showed disappointment.

"Nay, the pirate captain, with his officers, was an Englishman, with a mixed crew, though most of them were his countrymen. At least, so I have heard our captain state. But you have not yet told me, sir, how the schooner was painted."

"Black, with a white stripe."

The look of disappointment deepened on the young man's face.

"You thought she might have been the pirate?" said the missionary, smiling.

"To tell the truth, I did."

"The men I saw had nothing the appearance of pirates, but all the aspect of innocent Dutchmen. Their commander, however, made to me a statement which may interest you. He said that, a week before, he had been chased by a pirate schooner, with a black hull and two red stripes, and that he had only escaped by doubling upon her in a fog."

"Hah! where was this?"

"He did not say."

"That was the pirate!" said the lieutenant, emphatically.

The missionary was about replying, when the report of three or four shots, fired in quick succession, was heard outside, followed by a great tumult—the shouting of many voices and the hurried trampling of feet through the shrubbery!

CHAPTER III.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

BERTHA turned pale, and in her first alarm, moved instinctively toward Lieutenant Elmore.

"Do not be afraid," he said, to the young woman, in a quiet voice; "it is doubtless some quarrel among the natives."

He accompanied the missionary, who at once ran out of the house, followed by Jib Junk, whose hand, seamanlike, at once wandered to the well-sharpened sheath-knife in his belt.

The storm, by this time, had considerably subsided, so that the noise which had alarmed the inmates of the stone house could now be plainly heard. It came from a thicket beyond a rise of land, some thirty yards ahead; but, as the three men hurried in this direction, they suddenly beheld the form of a white man appear on the hillock, evidently closely pursued.

He ran toward them, waving his arms to them the moment they caught his sight. About a dozen natives armed with spears, appeared above the brow of the hillock. They were a formidable-looking set, with their muscular, half-naked forms, their long, coarse hair waving back from their tawny shoulders, their eyes gleaming fiercely, and the red glow of angry passion showing through their dusky skins.

The man they pursued, who was of a tall, muscular, active frame, attired in the garb of a seaman, although fleeing for his life, and exerting himself to the utmost, exhibited on his face none of the usual signs of fear. On the contrary, every feature was as composed as if the race he was running were merely a trial of speed, between himself and the natives, for their mutual amusement.

Malden now hurried forward, accompanied by the lieutenant and Job Junk, when, at a sign from the former, the natives paused.

"Good!" said the stranger, advancing quickly and grasping the missionary's hand. "You seem to have influence here. Perhaps you can save my life."

Although he spoke to Malden, yet the penetrating gaze of his light gray eyes rested on the lieutenant.

"I hope so," answered the missionary. "What is the trouble, Dormok? Why do you thus pursue this man?" he added, addressing a tall, stalwart warrior, who headed the natives.

"Boat come ashore. Man strike one me men," answered the native. "Me go to hit with club. White man fire pistol. Then all jump in boat. This white man," pointing at the stranger—"he no get in. Islanders too quick—get between him and boat. He run away. Must kill!"

"What the islander says is partly true," he remarked to Malden. "One of my men, being in liquor, did strike a native, and also discharge his pistol at the fellow, when he advanced upon him. Being the captain of a peaceable merchant vessel, and wishing to avoid bloodshed, especially as I knew my man was in the wrong, I ordered the whole crew into the boat, while I endeavored to pacify the natives. After a moment's consultation, however, the islanders made a rush for the boat, when I ordered the men to pull off, while to save myself, seeing some of them making for me, and having no chance to get into the boat, I ran. Fortunately, the pistol my man had fired did no harm, owing to the quivering of his arm from the effects of the liquor he had drunk."

Malden, again addressing the leader of the islanders, succeeded at last, to all appearances, in pacifying him. He did this principally by explaining that the sailor who fired had been so drunk that he did not know what he was doing. "So take your men away, Dormok, and let us have no more trouble," added Malden, in conclusion.

The islander complied, but several times, ere he had passed over the brow of the hill beyond, he turned, directing dark glances toward the stranger.

The latter now expressed his thanks to Malden for saving his life.

"Is your vessel off this island?" inquired the missionary. "I did not know there was any craft so near me."

"Ay, ay, sir. Don't you remember the Bremen schooner, that came in here for water, the other day?"

"Yes; but you are not the man who came ashore in charge of her boat's crew? He was a German."

"Ay, ay," said the man, laughing. "You mean Hans Penderl, my boatswain. He it was, you saw. All are Germans aboard except myself and half a dozen of the crew. After getting our water we put off; but the gale pouncing on us, we were driven hither, and but for that good anchoring-ground between the cliffs on the east shore, we must have left our bones on the coast. We dropped anchor there this morning."

"Ah! You were more fortunate than my

friend here," said Malden, glancing toward the lieutenant.

"Cast away?" inquired the man.

The lieutenant explained in a few words, and while he did so, the two men eyed each other closely.

The open, ingenuous countenance of the merchant captain, his respectful bearing, his plain garb, neat in all respects except on the Guernsey frock, which looked a little soiled, as if it had lately been brought into contact with the casks in his hold, convinced the young man that he was just what he appeared to be.

"Ay, ay," said he, "I'm sorry for you, as you were doubtless on an important mission when the accident happened."

"Yes. We were looking for the 'Flying Wake'—a pirate schooner, said to be cruising in this neighborhood."

The stranger elevated a pair of dark, heavy eyebrows, so straight that they seemed to form a black line drawn across his forehead.

"Ay, ay, the very fellow, I'll be bound, that chased us!"

And he described the schooner to Elmore.

"To tell the truth," he went on, "I feel nervous about that schooner, which may pounce upon us, at any moment. They say the 'Flying Wake' never yet missed her prey!"

From the moment the speaker arrived, Jib Junk had not taken his gaze from him. Something about the man's face seemed to particularly interest him, and the former, when he noticed the old tar, had started slightly, and colored. In a moment, however, he had seemed to recover himself, although a scarcely perceptible sneer might have been detected about his thin lips. Now, the old sailor, who had not previously ventured to address the stranger, took it upon himself to answer his last remark.

"You are mistook," said he, "about the Flying Wake—ay, ay, you are, or my name ain't Jib Junk. Some years ago, you see, I was one of the crew of the merchantman, *Scud*, from Liverpool, and we were chased by that infernal pirate, which we showed clean heels and escaped in a fog and a gale. Well, after that, we went into the port of Rio, where I deserted with some of the rest of the crew. We kept ourselves hid till our craft sailed. When we went back to the town, who should we see but that pirate, a-lyin' anchored in the harbor, and a boat cruising from her to land! We went to the Consul and told him what she was, and then went with some armed men sent to arrest the boat's crew, which we heard takin' their grog in a public house. They somehow spied us a-comin' and made off for their boat. Most of 'em got in and off, without gettin' hurt, but there was one fellow, which, just as he was goin' to jump in the boat, I seized by the collar, do you see, and made a blow at with a cutlass I had borrowed. He held up his hand, and caught the edge of my cutlass across his right palm, which must have made a scar to last for a lifetime. But somehow with his left hand, he then managed to give me, with his cutlass, the blow which has cut off some of me astern, when he got clear. Three minutes after the Wake was plying out of the harbor under everything she could carry, but I'm certain she never overhauled the *Scud*."

"Quite an experience," said the stranger, with a bland smile. "Do you think you'd know the man you struck, if you ever saw him again?"

"I ain't sure of that, as it was a-comin' on dusk at the time. I wouldn't have liked to 'spile' the effect of the grog he'd took, but blast me if I don't wish my cutlass had taken off his fingerhead, so that I'd never have a chance to know him again."

"I wish you had, my man," said the stranger, laughing, and at the same time thrusting his right hand into his pocket and rattling some loose silver there.

"By the way," he added, "we have plenty of this stuff aboard, and I'm afraid that's what the rascally pirate is after. That reminds me that I must get back to my craft as soon as I can."

"I will accompany you," said Malden. "I hardly dare trust to the natives, should they see you alone."

"Thank you, sir, although I don't like to trouble you."

The missionary went to the house, and having given a few directions to Bertha about preparing a repast for the two castaways, he went with the stranger.

In about half an hour he returned.

"You had no trouble from the natives?" said Bertha, inquiringly.

"No; but I do not like their looks. They seem far from satisfied. The stranger is such a

civil, peaceable fellow, I would not like to see him molested."

Soon after, the castaways were enjoying a repast prepared by the fair hands of Bertha. The meal consisted of roasted chicken, coconut sauce, which tasted like honey, boiled yams, and bread-fruit of a delicious flavor.

Lieutenant Elmore praised the repast highly, and the girl's face glowed with pleasure.

"Did you ever enjoy a better meal, Jib?" said the young man to the old tar, who had at first seemed awkward and confused, dining at the same table with his lieutenant, but whom the engaging, pleasant manners of Bertha had now restored to his ease.

"Better? No, sir. This young lass, bless her eyes, has cooked a better dinner than even nigger Jim could do, aboard our brig, which is saying a good deal, as that man, do you see, was brought up to it, having been rocked in a copper biler instead of a cradle, when he was a baby."

The storm had now abated. The sun's rays were darting through openings in the clouds, and the songs of birds were heard in the trees. Toward night the party strolled down to the beach to look for remains of the boat. Nothing, however, was to be seen except here and there a shattered plank, and a few thwart. The current along the reef had drawn every thing else far out to sea. Before venturing forth, Bertha had made some improvements in her toilet. She had smoothed her hair from her forehead, and softly brushed the long, dark curls hanging in such rich masses down her shoulders. The coy pleasure she derived from the society of the handsome lieutenant, who now walked by her side and conversed with her, added to her beauty the charm of piquancy by giving a deeper luster to her eyes and a brighter glow to her cheeks. After the moon had risen, the lieutenant proposed to ascend a lofty cliff, which must command an extensive view of the sea, and Bertha, whose trained limbs were full of activity, clasped her hands lightly and said:

"Oh, yes; let us all go up there, papa!"

Malden, however, excused himself, on the ground of his being a little rheumatic. Jib Junk, rolling his quid to conceal a sly grin, winked at one of the buttons on his waist-band and said, bowing to the lieutenant:

"Hope you'll excuse me, sir, too, which, though not rheumatic, will stay below here to scud along shore with the parson, especially as the rocks up aloft there may be a little wet."

As he spoke, his hand wandered instinctively to the blue painted patch on the seat of his pants, as if he would make sure it was in its proper place.

"As you wish," said the lieutenant. "I hope Miss Malden will not object to going up with me."

"No," answered Bertha, pouting a little as if vexed that "her papa" was not going too, although, at the same time, she looked pleased, for there was a novelty to her in being alone with a young man like Elmore.

The latter offered his hand, but so light and agile of foot was Bertha, that it was soon evident she required no assistance.

The two soon were on the summit of the elevation.

"A good prospect here," said Elmore.

"Yes, sir," answered Bertha. "I often come up here to look far out at sea, and watch the vessels passing in the distance."

"Do you never feel as if you wished you were aboard of one of those vessels? Have you no wish to visit the civilized ports—no curiosity to see any other part of the world than this lonesome island?"

"I will not say that I have not had such curiosity. Still I do not know what it is to feel 'lonesome' on this pleasant island. Papa has plenty of books, and he is so kind and gentle that I am very happy here."

"Could nothing induce you to leave this place?"

"Of course, if papa wanted to go away from here, I would go with him."

"Yes; but suppose some other man besides your father—somebody who was very dear to you, wanted you to go with him—what then?"

"When the time comes," said Bertha, laughing and blushing, while her voice faltered a little, "then I can tell better. I see no vessel," she cried, hastily changing the subject. "Your aft, Mr. Elmore, is nowhere in sight."

The lieutenant pulled a small night-glass from pocket, and took a long survey of the watery expanse.

No," said he. "No sign yet. This is a good place for a signal, at such a height. I will put a up here, with a white cloth attached, and it may yet pass near enough to see it."

Rising from the edge of the rugged platform on which the two stood, and bulging outward, was a rocky mass, shaped something like an inverted boat.

Bertha directed his attention to it remarking that she thought that would be a good place for a signal.

"Inside of it there is a little hollow or cave facing the sea," she said. "And years ago I frightened papa by crawling in there, while he was on the beach below."

The lieutenant, mounting the rocky mass, perceived in the top a fissure just large enough to hold a staff firmly.

He stood so near the edge that Bertha uttered a cry of alarm.

"I shall not fall," said the young man, smiling.

He was about leaping back to her side, when from the hollow beneath, which was screened by the projection above, an arm was thrust forth, and a hand grasping one of the legs of his pants, jerked him quickly off his feet.

Feeling himself descending, he threw out his arms and clutched at the rocky bowlder. Could he have grasped this firmly he might have saved himself; but so suddenly and violently had he been pulled down, that he had obtained only a momentary hold, thus partially breaking his fall.

Down he went, a wild scream from frightened Bertha ringing on his ears.

There was a rocky projection about fifteen feet beneath him, and fortunately his sword-hilt was caught by one of the sharp, flinty spurs. Hanging thus suspended, he drew himself up on the shelf, calling out to Bertha not to be alarmed, as he was safe. Then, glancing downward, at the sharp, rugged masses of rock on the beach 200 feet below, he shuddered at his narrow escape.

Previous to this, a moment after the lieutenant had fallen, Bertha beheld a dark form, the face turned from her, rush past. In the dim light she could not recognize it, although, by the attire, she knew it was one of the islanders. When she turned to get another view, he had disappeared, having probably scrambled with the activity of his race, half-way down the rock.

Now, hearing Elmore call, she peered over the edge of the precipice, and distinguished his person beneath on the rocky projection.

The rock above him being too smooth and steep to ascend, she called out to him that she would summon her father, who would bring a rope.

Soon gaining the foot of the precipice, she informed Mr. Malden of what had occurred. He lost no time in procuring from his habitation a coil of rope, which, among other useful articles, he kept there.

Guided by Bertha, he finally gained the point above the lieutenant, by whom, on calling his name, he was promptly answered.

The moon was now high up, and in the faint light shooting athwart the sea to the rock, the form of the young man could be faintly discerned.

"Have you a hold of the rope?" shouted Malden, when he had lowered it with the upper end securely fastened to the rocky bowlder.

"Ay, ay," answered Elmore, cheerily.

Hand over hand, assisted by the rocky wall, against which he pressed his feet, the young man ascended with activity.

The moment he had gained the summit, Malden grasped both his hands.

"A narrow escape, my young friend."

"It was," answered Elmore. "Where is the rascal who pulled me down? Have you seen anything of him?"

Bertha tells me she caught a glimpse of him as he rushed past her, but did not recognize him, although she perceived he was one of the islanders. What the man's motive could have been in doing this thing I cannot imagine."

A troubled expression crossed his face, and he looked at Bertha.

Then, drawing Elmore apart, he said, in a low voice:

"I am sorry to say I fear there will be trouble on this island before long. Until lately I have always found the natives friendly, and ready to listen to, and take, my advice on all subjects. But an islander named Darko, who has great influence among them, is, I am afraid, using all his endeavors to set them against me and all the white men who may visit these shores. His reasons for doing this may seem to him a good one, although to you and me it must appear ridiculous. The truth is, this fellow has for a long time admired Bertha, who, of course, is unable to reciprocate any such feeling. The other day he actually came to me and asked me to give him Bertha for a wife!

"As he is the head chief's son, he thinks that such an arrangement, while in every way genial to his feelings, would also promote the interests of the whites who might visit the isle.

"On my refusal, he would listen to no reasoning I had to offer, but appeared quite angry; he sullenly departed without another word. Subsequently he had the audacity to appear before Bertha, and make his proposal to her in person. She refused him promptly, when he went away frowning and muttering to himself.

"Now, all this may explain what has just happened. Darko is probably fast sowing dissatisfaction and hatred of the whites among his people. They have seen you with Bertha—the girl who refused their head chief's son—and some one of them may, therefore, have resolved upon, and have taken this method to effect, your destruction."

"My advice to you then, sir, is to be on your guard," said the lieutenant, losing all thought of his peril in his concern for Bertha. "These rascals must not be permitted to injure your daughter. Do you think you had better leave the island?"

"First I shall endeavor to pacify the islanders. My influence has always been great among them, and I may yet be able to show Darko how unreasonable he has been. But we must all be on our guard."

"That reminds me to ask why Jib Junk did not come up here with you? Do you know where he is? I must warn him, for a more reckless fellow I never saw."

"He left me soon after you mounted this precipice. I have not seen him since."

"Hark, what was that?"

A hoarse scream, like that of some person in distress, was heard in the distance.

"Such noises are often heard on this island," answered Malden. "Still, that did sound like a cry of pain."

They listened for a repetition of the noise; but, save the wash of the waves on the beach, and the whistling of a night-bird in a bread-fruit tree all was still.

CHAPTER IV. THE SEARCH.

JIB JUNK's departure from the missionary had been the natural result of a seaman's curiosity. He was desirous of taking a view of the Dutch schooner, which her captain—the man whose face had so puzzled his memory—had said lay anchored off the east shore.

The old sailor believed he would have time to get a look at the vessel, and return before the lieutenant should descend from the precipice.

"Ay, ay, plenty of time," he muttered, with a broad grin and the usual wink at the button on his waistbands. "Young fellows and young wimmen, when they come together, stick together like tar and oakum, and like that same, ain't easy to be separated. I've had my experiments with the lasses—twice me if I haven't—but since my misfortune"—here his hand wandered to the blue patch, "there ain't even an old lass that would give me a blink of her faded eye."

Rolling—waddling on—Jib, with satisfaction, saw the round, full moon at length come up above the sea. This, as he turned the corner of a rock, gave him a faint view of the tops of the schooner's masts, looming above the promontory of the bay, in which she was anchored.

Ahead of him there was a high rock, from the summit of which he believed he could obtain a good view of the craft. He therefore ascended the rock, which was about a hundred feet high, very rugged, and full of hollows and overhanging shelves.

From this point Jib could just distinguish barely more than the outline of the schooner's hull, but he saw enough to show him that she was a trim craft, very different in her light, sharp build from the usual run of Bremen schooners.

Seated on a rock, waiting for the moon to rise higher to afford him a better view, some movement of the yards caused him to bend his head suddenly forward, in an attempt to pierce the gloom between him and the craft. This movement saved his life; for a huge war-club, which had come down whizzing through the air, wielded with murderous force toward his head, was shivered to pieces on the rock behind him!

"Ahoy!" cried Jib, springing to his feet, somewhat startled, to find himself confronted by a tall savage, grasping a long knife.

"Kill!" gritted the native, showing his teeth, his eyes glowing.

"No—no, my lad," exclaimed Junk. "You won't do nothing of the kind."

Quickly seizing the arm grasping the knife, he

dealt the savage between the eyes a blow, which sent him reeling backward. The native recovered in a moment, and sprang toward him like a tiger, aiming his knife at the heart of his adversary.

Jib had now drawn the sheath-knife he wore in his belt, and had sprung upon a rising platform of rock, which brought his hand on a level with that of the tall savage. He dodged the blow aimed at him, just escaping the knife of the islander, which passed through his shirt, grazing the skin of his breast.

Up went Jib's knife, but the blow he aimed at the native's throat was quickly parried by the man's sinewy right arm, the point piercing the flesh between the shoulder and the elbow. The knife dropped from the islander's grasp; but, with his powerful left arm, he caught the sailor by the collar of his jacket, and, by a quick wrench, hurled him off the platform. Jib fell flat upon his breast, his right arm under him, and his knife-blade having struck the rock, broke short off near the handle.

The savage picked up his club, and ere Jib, elevating himself behind, could scramble to his feet, he raised it with his left hand, and dealt the prostrate man, upon the blue patch, a sounding blow, which brought him down again flat on the rock.

As Jib staggered to rise, the native holding him down with both knees, picked up his knife, and bent over the man with the weapon raised, evidently intending to drive it to the hilt in his neck.

At that critical moment, his arm was seized from behind, and a deep, commanding voice rung in his ear.

"Hold! What's all this?"

Two men had appeared from behind the angle of a rock near the scene of the affray, just as Junk was hurled down, and had sprung forward in time to prevent the final blow.

The moon, which was now throwing a flood of silver light on this part of the rock, revealed to the surprised native the features of these men.

One was a little above the middling height, and might have numbered twenty-five years. His full face, of an oval shape, glowed with the ruddy hue of health, his features were regular and handsome, his eyes singularly brilliant and penetrating, his hair curling closely about his well-formed head. He wore the garb of a seaman—a blue jacket, white duck trousers, and light shoes. The other was the person who has already been described as fleeing from the natives, a few hours previously, and whose life was saved by the missionary.

"Hoo! hoo!" grunted the islander through his teeth, endeavoring to withdraw his arm from the grasp of the two men, "sorry much you come—now!"

"Why it is he—Darko!" exclaimed the younger man, laughing, "the very one with whom I made an appointment. What in the deuce are you up to, Darko? Killing and slaying already?"

"Me kill all whites!" said Darko, savagely. "Me no like on island."

"Not all, I trust," said the young man. "You know it might be to your interest to have a few white friends. What is the matter with your other arm?"

"He stab," answered the savage, pointing at Jib. "You must not hinder. Me want to kill dis man."

"A deep cut," said the young sailor, surveying the bleeding arm with smiling indifference; "but it's only a flesh-wound, after all. Come, Darko, you better let this fellow alone—" looking down at Jib.

"Mus' kill all friends of missionary: 'fraid missionary daughter lub dis man or oder one—don't know which—berry kind to both—day 'teal her heart away from Darko. Darko want for him wife."

The young man smiled at the simplicity of the savage. Then a sudden thought seemed to occur to him, lighting up his dark, brilliant countenance with a peculiar expression of joy, which had in it something almost sinister.

"You must not kill this man, Darko. I'll take care of him. He shall not get between you and your love," laughing heartily, as he surveyed the old tar, who now stood briskly rubbing the blue patch.

"It is the fellow I told you about," said the other sailor; "he who was with the naval officer."

"Ah!" muttered the young man; "and you think, also, he is the one who—"

His companion made a sign of caution, looking at the same time toward Jib, who was glancing round him in a bewildered manner.

"Let me kill him," repeated Darko.

"No—no. You must not. I tell you, I'll take care of him. He shan't interfere with you in any way."

The speaker now made a sign to his companion, who at once, drawing a small whistle from his pocket, blew upon it three shrill blasts.

The sound of approaching footsteps was heard. Soon half a dozen stout seamen made their appearance.

"Take care of this fellow," said the young man, pointing at Jib; "pick him up, take him to the schooner, and don't let him escape."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered one of the men.

"Why, twig me!" exclaimed Jib, who was still at work on the blue patch, "what's all this—"

Ere he could complete the sentence, he was picked up and lifted, kicking, between the six sailors, who conveyed him rapidly down the cliff.

"Now, Darko, lead us before the chief," said the young sailor to the islander.

"Me no like. You been do good for Darko. You once give him whole pile of tappa (cloth) and plenty tobacco. Darko no hurt you; but chief kill quick oder one, me 'fraid. Bad he get in quarrel, dis morning, with islanders."

"I don't think the chief will harm either of us," said the young man. "You must tell him that I want to have a talk with him about something which will do him and his people much good—will bring him in all the tobacco and all the cloth he may want, and make him sure to conquer the Fejees in battle, whenever he may go to fight them. You have plenty of influence with your father, Darko—you must use it for the benefit of yourself and people, and hark you, Darko," he added, significantly—"to help you in your love for the white girl—the missionary's daughter!"

"You make white girl love Darko—be Darko's wife?"

"Yes. If you persuade your father to give me a hearing and take my advice, I will manage it so that the white girl shall be your wife."

"How you do so? How you make girl love man?"

"You will see. I know how. I will persuade her to it—will talk to her, and she will yet consent to be yours."

Wild joy animated the countenance of the native.

"It is well," he said. "Me will—me will make father—chief listen to and no harm you—oh, yes, me will—come!"

And, apparently heedless of the wound he had received in the arm, Darko, motioning the two men to follow, led the way down the cliff.

CHAPTER V.

THE SEARCH.

BERTHA, with her father and Elmore, soon gained the beach.

They looked round them in vain for Jib Junk.

The missionary, however, soon quieted Elmore's anxiety. Jib had evidently merely gone to take a look about the island, and would probably come back in a short time.

The trio went to the stone house.

"Have you arms here, sir?" inquired Elmore, as they seated themselves near the doorway, on the lawn.

"No; not a gun or a pistol about the premises. You must know I am a man of peace, and as such, could not think of carrying arms."

To this Elmore merely bowed; but he directed an eloquent glance toward Bertha, thinking that for her sake, the missionary ought to be provided with arms.

For several hours the three sat on the lawn, conversing. At times Elmore would answer Mr. Malden at random, like one whose mind was occupied. In fact the prolonged absence of Jib Junk troubled him, while the presence of Bertha, who spoke now and then, also distracted his attention from the grave remarks of the missionary.

With the moonlight streaming through the trees upon her sweet, innocent face, her long, dark hair falling in shining masses over her shoulders, her hands resting on her lap, her eyelashes drooping, now and then, beneath the ardent yet respectful glances of the young officer, the island girl was certainly an attractive object to him, who for months had seen nothing but the ocean and its surroundings, and heard only the rough voices of sunbrowned seamen.

The island now was full of beauty, and weird, melancholy music. The silvery waves tinkling on the beach, the dim openings through the trees, where the shadows of branches swayed and swung on the green sward, the songs of in-

numerable birds of the night, with now and then a glimpse of their silvery wings, were in harmony with the feelings Bertha had awakened in Elmore's breast.

Suddenly Mr. Malden looked at Bertha—a mischievous smile about his usually serious mouth.

"Bertha, it is well-nigh midnight. You sit up late."

The young woman blushed deeply, and turned her warm cheek away from her father's scrutiny to hide a look of vexation.

"I—The truth is—I did not know it was so late."

The missionary laughed.

"Why that laugh, papa?"

"Oh, well, young people will be young people," said Mr. Malden. "I have a strong suspicion that a certain young man has had something to do with this forgetfulness of time."

"Indeed," said Elmore, now coloring slightly on his part, and feeling bound to come to the rescue. "I think the absence of Jib Junk has had its influence on Miss Malden. She cannot but feel a little curious about the singular absence of my man."

Malden slowly shook his head, looking still more amused.

"The young man I referred to, as causing Bertha's forgetfulness of time, is none other than a certain handsome young fellow, yclept the second mate—so at least he called himself—of the Dutch schooner. He stopped here, on the night the vessel came here for water, and had a chat with me, and also addressed a few words to Bertha. Now, knowing the Dutch schooner to be again anchored off the island, she has been sitting up so long in the hope that he might come this way again."

"Oh, papa!" gasped Bertha, the crimson deepening every moment on her cheek, "how—how can you say that? What will Mr. Elmore think of me?"

The lieutenant laughed, but it was evidently with an effort.

"It is a good joke," said he. "Of course we know Miss Malden could take but little interest in the young Dutchman."

"Dutch? Oh, no, you mistake," said Malden; "the young man, if I mistake not, is an Englishman; at any rate he spoke excellent English—didn't he, Bertha?"

"He talked well—that is, pretty well. I didn't hear all he said to you, papa."

She spoke softly and with downcast gaze. When she lifted her glance again, Elmore noticed a certain half-shy, yet interested look, which pained him deeply.

"Why so?" he asked himself.

Was it merely that his vanity was wounded at the interest she seemed to show for the young mate?

He was a man of deep, strong feelings, which he never mistook. He knew, therefore, it was not merely wounded vanity that troubled him, but that Bertha had, even in their brief acquaintance, so interested him that the thought of her preferring another's society to his would make him miserable.

And now, whether she desired to escape further remarks of her father regarding the young mate, or to pretend indifference as to his coming, or whether she really felt the need of repose, Elmore could not determine, but he noticed that she rose, still blushing, and with a gentle good-night, hastily glided into the stone house.

The lieutenant remained sad and thoughtful a moment; then rising, he said he must go and hunt his man, Jib Junk.

"It is strange he stays so long. I ought to go with you. After the attempt on your life, I hardly think it safe for you to venture alone."

"Nay," answered Elmore, "your daughter is here alone; you had better remain. Have no fears for me," he added, pulling a pistol from his breast-pocket, and half-smiling at Malden's startled look.

"I hope you may have no occasion to use it," said the missionary.

"I intend leaving this with you, sir," said Elmore. "You know not what might happen. Your daughter's safety is paramount to all else."

"But, my dear sir," the missionary began, as he reluctantly accepted the weapon, "you have nothing—"

Elmore tapped his sword.

"That will answer my purpose."

He then bowed and withdrew.

For hours Elmore searched in vain for Jib Junk. In the dim light, unacquainted with the place, he lost his way, for he had wandered

inland some distance from the beach, after a brief inspection of the Dutch schooner.

During this inspection he was but fifteen yards from the boat's crew, which had conveyed Junk to the vessel and had then returned. The men, with their boat, were in an inlet, sheltered by high rocks, so that they had escaped the attention of Elmore, who, for the same reason, had been neither seen nor heard by them.

The young man now found himself in a dense thicket, walking along a narrow path, in the hope that it might lead him back to the beach. This path, after a gradual ascent, suddenly turning to the right, sloped downward.

Walking quickly, Elmore, all at once, found himself in a clearing, with a light flashing directly before him, not more than twenty yards distant.

This light came from a lantern—evidently taken from some ship—hung in the center of a large hut, the opening in front of which was directly before the young man.

There—some seated, others standing—were about thirty dusky, stalwart islanders, in their midst two white men, in seaman's attire, talking earnestly with a tall, powerful native, leaning on a huge war-club, and smoking a long pipe.

The rustling caused by his striking against the brush aroused the alert natives, some of whom, rushing to the front of the hut, peered forth, to instantly behold the dim figure of the young man.

Observing that he was discovered, Elmore, knowing that to retreat would be the worst thing he could do under the circumstances, boldly advanced to the very opening of the hut.

There was a wild shout—the harsh muttering of many discordant voices—clubs were lifted, and half a dozen spears pointed at the young officer's heart.

He drew his sword, but, at the same moment, the authoritative voice of the tall native in the center of the group was heard.

Then spears and clubs were lowered; he who had previously spoken, and who evidently was the chief, motioned to the young man to come in.

He obeyed, his hand, however, still on the hilt of his sword.

The chief eyed him sternly. He was an old man, but straight, vigorous and powerful looking, with keen, penetrating eyes.

Elmore quietly returned his gaze, then, with some surprise, looked at the two white men, one of whom was the tall sailor whom he had so lately seen fleeing from the natives.

The younger smiled slightly, while the other bowed to the naval officer.

"You see I have managed to obtain the goodwill of these fellows; the promise of a few pounds of tobacco and some cloth has done it," he said, in a low voice, to Elmore.

Darko, who stood near his father, now said a few hasty words to him in the native tongue.

The old chief looked undecided a moment; then a fierce gleam shot from his eyes, and, in a loud voice, he issued an order to some of the natives around him.

Two of them sprung toward Elmore, with uplifted war-clubs. The young man, drawing his sword, raised it to strike the foremost one, when his arms were seized from behind, and he was held in a firm grasp, so that he could not move, by two of the savages.

"Harmand, we must prevent this," said the young sailor from the Dutch schooner.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered his tall companion.

As the younger spoke, he had firmly placed himself between the uplifted clubs and the imperiled officer, to be readily joined by his shipmate.

"Friend Darko, you must not do this thing. Call your men away."

"Me hate—hate much!" answered Darko, showing his white teeth. "Why you go between?"

The other bent over and whispered something to Darko, who had advanced.

The native shook his head, while the two savages with clubs, holding the implements suspended, stood impatiently awaiting further orders.

Again the young sailor whispered, this time in an earnest manner, something which seemed to have its effect upon Darko, who reluctantly went back and spoke to his father, the chief.

The latter, shrugging his broad shoulders, nodded assent, when, with a word and a sign, Darko sent the threatening natives back to their places.

"Thank you; I think I owe my life to you both, who seem to have influence with these savage men."

"We have the influence which the prospect of gain always has on persons of their stamp," answered the younger of the two sailors.

Then he walked over to Darko, and drawing him aside, had with him a brief conference.

Elmore had now turned toward the opening of the hut, but the natives still opposed his progress.

The old chief, however, made a sign to them, when the young man was permitted to go. Ere doing so, however, the thought occurred to him that perhaps the savages could tell him something about his man, Jib Junk.

He made the inquiry of the chief, who, however, did not understand all he said, until Darko, frowning, unwillingly acted as interpreter.

"He know nothing of you man," said Darko, when his father had answered.

Unseen by Elmore, the two white men from the schooner exchanged glances, then they followed him from the hut.

The younger was the first to speak as they walked on.

"A pleasant night, sir. Anchored off here, or lying off and on? Have not seen your craft."

"My vessel is not in sight," replied Elmore; then he made a brief explanation, also speaking of the loss of Jib Junk.

"Haven't seen him," said the tall man—"neither I nor Mr. Bolton."

"No," said the latter, "I think you mistake, Harmand. That little fellow we saw about to be stabbed by a savage, was evidently the man this gentleman is speaking of."

"Ay, ay, then we have seen him," said Harmand, turning his head to conceal a smile.

Explanations were soon made to Elmore.

"And wherefore pick up my man and carry him off to your schooner?" said the young officer, in surprise.

"To keep him out of harm's way until the owner should call for him," said Bolton, laughing. "You are doubtless aware that, for some reason or other, the natives have resolved to henceforth kill and slay every white man they find on this island. But for the fact that we have made a trade arrangement with them, they would have murdered us. Fearing that your man, who had the appearance of an adventurous fellow, might again fall into their hands, we took the precaution of taking him to the schooner."

Elmore would have thanked the speaker, but for a peculiar, mocking smile on his face which puzzled him. He looked at him keenly, when the disagreeable smile at once vanished, and the young fellow held out his hand with a seaman's frankness.

"I hope I haven't offended; did what I thought would be for the best."

"Thank you," said Elmore, but even as he spoke, that peculiar mocking look was in the other's eyes.

"Would you be kind enough to send him ashore to me? I like to have him with me, for he is a trustworthy fellow."

"Nay, had you not better come aboard? I tell you the natives mean mischief, and that very soon—if not *this very night*."

Elmore started.

"You may well start," continued the other. "You have cause for alarm—"

"I was thinking of the missionary and his daughter, who live on this island. Do you think the natives will harm them?"

"I am sure they will if they get a chance. My craft, however, is a fast sailer; albeit a Dutchman," he added, smiling. "Aboard her they will have nothing to fear."

"You intend inviting them aboard?"

"Invite them—ay—and if they refuse—*force them*. The peril is too near for delay. Even this very night they may attack the missionary in his house, murder him, and either carry off or kill his child."

"I thank you for telling me," said Elmore. I will, the moment we arrive where I can trace my way, hurry to the stone house, warn the missionary and his child of their danger, and persuade them to go with me aboard your friendly schooner."

"Thank you," said Bolton, in a tone so singular that Elmore started and looked at him.

They hurried on, neither Bolton nor his shipmate saying another word, and soon came upon a spot which afforded them a view of the schooner.

The moon at this time was throwing a flood of light on the calm water, and revealing by contrast the tall, tapering spars and neatly molded hull of the schooner, which lay not more than half a mile distant.

Elmore was surprised at the delicate carving of the schooner's hull, at the beautiful shape of her yards and masts, and the sharp contour of the bows.

She was a craft evidently "built for speed,"

and sat on the water as if proud of her beauty.

"Is it possible they built such a craft in Bremen?" said Elmore.

"Not often," answered Bolton, his eyes glowing with professional pride, as he looked toward the schooner. "She was originally an American craft. I bought her of the owner, a Southerner, about to retire from sea life."

Elmore now glanced round him, thinking he could find his way back to the missionary's dwelling. "I will now bid you good-night," he said to Bolton. "I will to the stone house at once. Your boat, I suppose, will be ready—"

"Whenever you bring the missionary and his daughter here," interrupted Bolton, "you will find my boat waiting to take you and them to the schooner."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ATTACK.

ELMORE easily found the way to the stone house.

As he approached the building, was it fancy, or did he really see a number of indistinct forms, hovering about the grove to the right of the house?

To make sure, he walked in this direction until he discovered near the edge of the grove a number of clumps of the shrubbery which, looming up in the shadow, might well be mistaken at night for human beings.

"Is it you, lieutenant?" called the missionary, in a low voice, as Elmore now drew near the stone house.

"Yes, sir."

The young officer was soon on the threshold, where he found Malden, whose manner of holding the pistol betokened his inexperience in the handling of warlike instruments.

In a few words the young man explained his adventure.

"Upon my word a narrow escape. The man called Bolton, from your description, was evidently the same young fellow about whom I was laughing with Bertha."

"I thought so," muttered Elmore, and a pang of keen jealousy went through his heart.

"There is no time to lose," he said, changing the subject. "You and your daughter had better go at once aboard the schooner. The natives may attack you to-night."

Malden shrugged his shoulders, and a look of pain crossed his face.

"I would not have believed those natives would have so turned against me. But it is evidently that Darko's work. I will at once make preparations to go aboard the schooner," he added, sighing and glancing round him with a wistful look, "although I cannot believe that my desertion of this place is to be a permanent one. I hope yet to see these misguided men once more gathered together under my spiritual teachings."

It was arranged that Malden should wake his daughter, and when she was ready to go, that they should repair at once to the schooner's boat. Perhaps Captain Bolton would see that what few things they had in the house were brought off to them aboard the schooner before or by morning.

While they were talking, Bertha came gliding into the room.

"I thought you were asleep, my child?" said the missionary, surprised.

"I could not sleep; I know not why, but I feel uneasy to-night."

"You have good reason." And Malden at once proceeded to impart the intelligence received from Elmore.

The latter, watching her, when the name of Bolton was mentioned, perceived that same interested look he had previously noticed.

"That man, with his dark, personal beauty and winning manners," thought the young lieutenant, "has evidently pleased this young girl."

He stood in a sad reverie, forgetting even the danger of which he had come to inform Malden and his daughter. He had never seen a young woman who had so attracted him as did this innocent girl of the isle, and now it was evident she could be more easily won by another than by him.

He was suddenly roused from his musing by the hand of Malden gently laid on his shoulder. As he looked up, he noticed that Bertha was also watching him; but the moment her gaze encountered his, she colored slightly, and, with the coy grace of an innocent maiden caught looking at one of the other sex, she turned her eyes toward the sea.

She had borne the news of her peril much better than either Malden or Elmore had expected. Her face had paled a little at first, but

a look of calm resolution had gradually settled about the beautiful mouth.

"In a brown study, my young friend?" said the missionary. "I believe we are ready to start."

"I must first get my hat and coat," said Bertha.

She went away, to soon reappear, clad in a little dark cloth coat, fitting well to the waist, and setting off the graceful curve and rounded proportions of that part of her person. The hat was of dark straw, turned up in the front, and having a small ostrich feather, it well became Bertha's style of beauty.

The young lieutenant, while he admired the neatly-fitting garb, was not surprised to see Bertha so well provided with a wardrobe, as her father had informed him that a friendly sea-captain, passing that way now and then in a brig from the Sandwich Islands, would take his orders for such articles of dress as he required for the use of himself and child.

"I suppose we had better start at once," remarked Malden.

Ere the lieutenant could reply, Bertha, who now stood distinctly revealed in all her youthful beauty in the doorway, through which streamed the light of the lamp on the table inside, drew back, with a low cry of alarm.

"What is it?" queried Malden and Elmore, in a breath.

"There!" she answered, pointing toward the grove; "there are savages coming this way."

The two men, looking out, saw in fact a large body of armed natives, their forms dimly revealed in the moonlight, approaching from the grove.

The natives, evidently aware that they were detected, now were seen running swiftly toward the little building.

"We can not go out now," said Malden.

He closed the door, which was a large, strong one, and, assisted by Elmore, he fastened it on the inside with two strong bolts. Next, the lower window-openings were closed by the strong wooden shutters with which they were provided, and which also had fastenings on the inside.

The missionary then went up-stairs, followed by Elmore and his daughter, into the large room. This was provided with two windows, one on each side.

"Now," said Malden, "I will hold a parley with these fellows, and see if I can not persuade them to go away."

"No, papa!" cried Bertha, in alarm. "I am afraid you will be killed if you do! Remember, these natives are treacherous people, as I have heard you say, and when they meditate deeds of violence, they can not be turned from their purpose."

"I will go, sir, in your stead!" cried Elmore, advancing to the window.

Bertha, however, laid her hand on his arm, and looked up into his face, earnestly and pleadingly.

"No—not you, either. Better we all remain without showing ourselves."

Malden, however, had sprung to the window, which he opened.

To his surprise, no person was visible. He went to the other window, but could still see no sign of the natives.

"Upon my word, very singular," he said—"no sign of those fellows."

"I dare say they are hidden somewhere not far off," answered Elmore. "They have perhaps secreted themselves to make us think they have passed on, and thus put us off our guard."

"It may be so, or they may be on the other side of the house."

"I will go and see," said Elmore.

He descended to the first floor, and holding his pistol ready for use, proceeded to cautiously unfasten one of the shutters. Opening this "on a crack," he peered forth, to behold the natives just in the act of crouching down in some clumps of shrubbery, not far distant.

It was evident they desired to impress the inmates of the house with the belief that they had passed on, so that Malden might open the door, when they would all rush for the house and enter ere he could shut them out.

Elmore reclosed the shutter, being careful to make no noise, and returned up-stairs.

Having communicated his discovery, he asked the missionary if he did not think that, by stealing out through the lower window on that side of the house opposite the one near which the natives were concealed, they could make their way, unobserved by the islanders, to the schooner's boat.

"I don't know," said Malden. "These fellows have sharp eyes."

Elmore, however, advised that they should make the attempt.

"Leave your daughter to me," he said, looking toward Bertha, who had turned quite pale. "I'll defend her to the last, should occasion require."

Malden was about yielding to Elmore's request, when a crash was heard at the door.

"They are forcing open the door!" gasped Bertha.

In fact, by leaning well out of the side window, Malden could now see some of the natives, who, with a huge log between them, were using it as a battering-ram against the door.

When several blows had been dealt, a cracking sound proclaimed that the door must soon give way.

"Hold, there!" exclaimed Malden, from the window, "what would you do?"

Several of the natives hearing him, came beneath and looked up. One of these was Darko.

"Give girl!" he exclaimed, "and we go away. No give and me kill you!"

"Darko, what has possessed you? Does the Bible teach you to behave in this manner? Remember what I have so often said to you, when making my 'big talk' to you and your people near the bread-fruit grove."

"No care for 'big talk,' tired of 'big talk' and all white people. No want on island more. Give girl, and we put you on schooner and send you away."

Even as he spoke, however, the treacherous native flung a huge war-club he held with unerring precision at the head of missionary. The latter, dodging it, however, just escaped the implement, which passed within a few inches of his temple.

"There is no hope of doing anything now, with these people," said Malden to Elmore. "They want Bertha, and I am afraid they will succeed in getting her!"

"Oh, papa!" wailed the young girl, clinging to his arm.

Meanwhile, crash after crash was heard at the door.

Elmore, thrusting his head out of the window, looked up toward the roof, measuring the distance with a quick glance.

"You have a scuttle, of course?" he said to Malden.

"Yes."

"Then we can keep the natives at bay for awhile."

The ladder, in another corner of the room, being pointed out to him, Elmore placed it and soon opened the scuttle.

"Now for the roof!" said he.

He spoke with a cheerfulness which inspired Bertha with a feeling of confidence, although she could not conceive how they could long escape the savages.

Elmore assisted Bertha to the roof.

When Malden was also arrived, he drew the ladder up so that the savages, when they should come, could not follow.

The crashing at the door still continued. Elmore, peering over the edge of the roof, was seen by several of the savages, who at once set up a fierce shout.

Then the door was heard to give way, followed by the yells of the natives as they rushed into the building.

Bertha shrunk close to the side of the lieutenant, who, holding his pistol ready, sat peering down the open scuttle.

Beneath it the savages soon appeared. A spear was hurled at Elmore, who, however, dodged it easily.

A hurried consultation now took place among the natives, when a few of them departed, to return, in the course of half an hour, with a rude ladder formed of branches and twigs.

Meanwhile Elmore who had been earnestly looking seaward, had distinguished, far away, in the indistinct light, a slender column-like object, which he at once knew to be a sail.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIGNAL.

The discovery of the sail, soon followed by the appearance of the savages with a ladder, was peculiarly aggravating to Elmore, who had good reason to believe that could the natives be kept away until morning, he would obtain assistance from the stranger, which he judged was heading toward the island. Hope even suggested to him that the vessel was not a stranger, but his own brig, which a fortunate chance had directed this way, when she was most needed.

He, therefore, resolved to use every effort to keep the natives at bay until he could contrive to signal the craft.

The scuttle, fortunately, was a stout one made of sheet iron. This he quickly secured over the opening, and soon heard the natives vainly battering at it to force it off. Soon the noise at the scuttle, followed by a crash, abruptly ceased.

"They have broken their ladder," suggested Malden. "It was an awkward one, but I don't believe, fortunately for us, that they could make a better one in so short a time."

Hitherto Elmore had said nothing to his companions about the sail, not caring to awaken hopes which there seemed no chance of realizing.

Now, however, he spoke of his discovery and his intentions regarding it.

"We must make a fire signal," said he. "It would be just the thing."

"I wish we had brought it up with us," said Bertha, "for papa has one."

"Yes," said Malden, "but as we did not, how is our friend Elmore going to make his fire-signal?"

"I hardly know yet myself," said the young man.

He sat buried in thought for some minutes, Bertha watching him with the most intense interest in her soft, brown eyes.

"I have it!" Elmore said at length, rising.

"Oh, papa, he has thought of something!" cried Bertha, joyfully.

"In the first place," said Elmore, "we must get something to answer for a pole. If you please, Mr. Malden, will you cut off that branch, when I haul it down?"—pointing toward the slender branch of a tree, hanging within reach of his hand.

So saying, Elmore pulled the branch down as forcibly as he could, when Malden severed it ten feet from the end, as directed.

"I hope the natives won't take a notion to get to us by climbing that tree, and descending by some of those larger branches belonging to the one we have just cut off," said the missionary.

"Only one at a time could come if they tried it," said Elmore; "and having with me a pistol and a supply of powder and shot, I could easily prevent their 'boarding' us in that way."

With his penknife, he now proceeded to cut off some of the pieces of tarred canvas, which, hanging over the edge of the roof, had never been trimmed. These pieces he wound round and round the branch, and secured them to it.

Then, pulling from his pocket a small box of matches, which on his departure from his vessel, he had not neglected to carry with him, he was about striking a light, when there was a sudden interruption to his proceedings.

This was a shriek of warning from Bertha, who, chancing to turn her eyes to the edge of the roof above the window, beheld the dark face and brawny arm of a native protruding over the sill.

The arm was upraised—the other hand grasping the edge of the roof—was drawn back, the savage being in the act of darting a long spear at Malden, the person nearest him, and whose back was turned toward him.

As Bertha shrieked, she threw herself toward her father; but the savage had already given the impetus to the spear, and it was about to leave his hand.

Had it done so in the then position of the native, it must have passed through the body of the beautiful girl, who, at that moment, in her eagerness to save her father, was on a line with it.

But the quick eye of the lieutenant had seen all at a glance, and raising his pistol he discharged it, just as the weapon of the savage was about being thrown.

The bullet crashed through the islander's head, and though the weapon left his hand, it did so at an angle of thirty degrees, as his body fell back to the ground.

"I don't think any of them will attempt that again," said the young man, coolly, as he thrust his smoking pistol into his belt.

Malden looked both grieved and horrified when his daughter explained to him the peril he had just escaped. It hardly seemed possible to him that these wild men, who, although they had never seemed particularly friendly, had lately been under his influence, and so ready to take his advice in most things, could have become so bitter against him.

Meanwhile, the shrieks and yells of the islanders, as they gathered round the body of their fallen companion, were heard splitting the air.

A moment later, many of them were seen hurrying toward the thicket, whence the blow of an ax were soon heard to proceed.

"What are they doing, now?" inquired the terrified Bertha.

"They are, I am afraid, making ladders, with which they doubtless hope to get up to us," said the missionary.

Elmore was endeavoring to strike a light; but his matches being damp, he feared he would not succeed, as he had now used all except three. These, one after the other, proved worthless.

"This is bad," said Malden. "Here come the natives now," he added, pointing to a party who were revealed by the moonlight, hurrying toward the house with a rudely-constructed ladder of boughs and twigs.

I do not think there are many islanders in the house," said Elmore. "Tell me where your lantern and matches are, and I will go and get them."

"Oh, no," cried Bertha. "You must not. There may be some of those wild men lurking inside."

"At all events, the risk is worth running," answered the young man.

The missionary having informed him that the lantern was in a corner of the room directly beneath them, and the matches on the mantle, Elmore, opening the scuttle, sprang lightly into the apartment, which he now found deserted, although he could hear some of the natives in the room below. He found the lantern and matches, which he passed up to Malden.

"Now, how is he going to get back to us?" cried Bertha, anxiously.

Elmore answered by scrambling through the window, when, with supple activity, springing up on the sill, he caught the edge of the roof and drew himself quickly thereon. Malden having already secured the scuttle, Elmore at once proceeded to light his lantern.

"Here they are now!" said the missionary, looking over the edge of the roof, beneath which the natives had already planted the ladder.

The young man now performed a perilous feat. Hanging by the edge of the roof, he kicked down the ladder, as the islanders were preparing to ascend it. A shower of spears were hurled at him from below, but fortunately they did not strike him, although one passed through his pants, grazing his skin.

He now gave directions to Malden to wave the lantern, which he had lighted, while, posting himself near the edge of the roof, pistol in hand, he stood ready to keep the natives at bay.

Malden stood waving the lantern as a signal, while Elmore discharged shot after shot at the natives, as they endeavored to mount the ladder, which they had replaced.

Several fell back wounded, when the rest drew back, apparently holding a consultation.

From the thicket another party now advanced with a second ladder, which they soon placed on the other side of the house.

"We soon get, now!" yelled Darko, triumphantly, from below.

In fact, it seemed as if the trio must soon be surrounded by their enemies, for of course Elmore could not keep them back on both sides of the house.

"Oh, what can we do now?" exclaimed Bertha, clasping her hands, as the islanders, making a rush, proceeded to ascend on both sides.

Elmore had fired his last load. He ran to the scuttle and applied his ear to it, but the voices of natives in the room below, precluded all hope of escape in that direction.

In fact, there seemed no alternative left him but to die fighting to the last for the lovely girl at his side.

"We can not escape, it seems," he said to Bertha; "but I can protect you while life lasts!"

He threw an arm round her waist, and drawing his sword, stood awaiting the dreaded moment, while poor Malden, almost wild in his anxiety for his child, continued waving the lantern frantically about his head, as if he thought that would bring the wished-for aid.

Already the head of each of the foremost of the savages, on both sides of the house, appeared above the edges of the roof; in another minute, the little party would be surrounded.

At this critical instant, a light, active form, which had darted up the tree nearest the house—the same from which Elmore had cut the branch—came swinging down by one of the pendent limbs overhanging the roof, and alighted in front of Elmore and the young girl.

It was Bolton, who, with a half-sarcastic smile curling his handsome lip, glanced first at Elmore and then at Malden.

To snatch the lantern from the hand of the

missionary—to fling it from the top of the house to the ground, where it was shivered to atoms, was with him the work of a moment.

"We want no signals here," he said, laughing. "The fewer the better!"

The impudence of the intruder excited Elmore's indignation.

"That lantern was waved by my orders!" he cried; "by what right?"

This, however, was no time for reprimanding, and Elmore was interrupted by the rush toward him of the savages, who had mounted to the roof.

The intrusive Bolton, quietly facing them, held up an arm.

"Back, Darko!" he said to this savage, who headed the party; "you must not harm these people."

"Why you interfere all time?" inquired the native. "You say you not, if we no harm girl. No want to harm girl—want to take away with me."

"I have something to say to all these people before you harm them," answered Bolton. "Something of importance and which I must say to them in private."

Darko looked dissatisfied.

"We have much trouble to get white men. One shoot four natives—all good warriors. Both white men we must kill."

"Not yet. Wait until I have said a few words to them in private, and then you may do with them what you like."

"Well, quick say!" cried the impatient Darko.

"Not here; it must be on the ground below."

Darko, becoming every moment more impatient, stepped to the edge of the roof and issued, in his native tongue, some order to a group of the natives at the foot of the ladder.

He then informed Bolton that he might conduct the whites below, and say to them what he had to say in the shortest possible time.

Elmore assisted the young girl to the ground, and Malden and Bolton followed.

The savages also descending, Darko posted a guard on three sides of the party, at the distance of fifty yards, to preclude the possibility of an escape.

"You are in a tight 'fix,'" said Bolton to Elmore, the moment they had descended the ladder.

"Yes; but as you seem to have such a singular influence over these natives, why not persuade them to let us go?"

"So I would, if it were in my power; but my influence is only that of the trader. I have goods—tobacco, cloth and other articles, which these fellows are anxious to buy, and so do not want to offend me, for fear I'll not let them have the goods."

"Is there, then, no hope for us—no hope for my child?" inquired Malden.

"I can not see any, at present."

"Why did you destroy the signal?" inquired Elmore, angrily. "You had no right to do that. The lantern, seen by a certain craft off the island, and which I think is a friendly one, would have brought us assistance."

"You are mistaken. I have good reason to fear that that craft is the pirate about which you have spoken to me. No assistance could be expected from such people, and moreover, I would not care to have them drawn to this island, off which is my craft, which they are so anxious to seize, and make it and its contents their booty. Now, therefore, you can understand why I destroyed that signal."

"You have owned to me that you have a good, strong crew," said Elmore. "You were doubtless drawn here by the yells of the islanders, and other sounds of conflict. Why did you not bring some of your men to help us?"

Bolton smiled.

"You must know that I am, in a degree, bound to the islanders as they are to me. I have made a compact with them to supply them with certain goods. If I fight with them, farewell my profit!"

"And so, for the sake of a few paltry dollars, you would see human life sacrificed?"

"I must acknowledge," said Bolton, laughing, "that I have so long associated with Dutchmen that I have imbibed some of their love of gain. To my thinking," he added, with a peculiar flash of the eye, "there is something bewitchingly attractive in the gleam and the color of gold and silver, especially if it is your own."

Elmore glanced at Bertha, but he fancied he did not perceive any expression of that disgust which it seemed to him must be excited by the words of the speaker. Since the appearance of Bolton, the young girl had seemed agitated, and had trembled on the arm of the lieutenant,

while a heightened color overspread her lovely cheeks.

All this, however, may have been caused by the alarm excited within her by the sight of the fierce savage, and by the threats of their leader, Darko.

"That I have determined to assist you, notwithstanding," continued Bolton, "you may be sure. A boat, with a good crew, lies yonder, behind that rock near the beach, ready to receive you all."

"But the natives, who are watching, will see us," said Malden; "and—"

"Never mind; I'll try to smooth it all over with Darko, so that he'll make a good trade with me yet. Come, there is no time to lose. We must make a rush for that boat, which, fortunately, is but a few yards distant. I will take charge of this young lady," he added, bowing to Bertha, "as I know the best places for wading through the shallow water among the rocks; for you can perceive we'll have to wade a little where the water is ankle-deep. I did not dare to bring my boat any nearer, fearing it would be seen by the natives."

With these words, Bolton suddenly caught Bertha in his arms, lifting her as if she were a mere child, and darting away with her toward the beach.

The others followed quickly, and were in the boat ere the savages had recovered from the surprise caused by this movement.

"Give way!" exclaimed Bolton; "a quick, steady pull, my lads."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the ready answer, and away went the boat, as the oars splashed in the water, shooting along past the rocks.

The lieutenant, who, although he knew that circumstances rendered it necessary, was not quite pleased with the manner in which Bolton had run away with Bertha, seated himself near the young woman, who, with cheeks flushed to scarlet, now looked up at him and smiled.

"You were not offended," he said, a little piqued, "at Bolton's rude way of getting you to the boat?"

"Oh, no; it could not be helped. At any other time of course I should not have liked it."

The noise of the oars in the rowlocks and the water drowned their voices, but Bolton, standing in front of them in the stern sheets, seemed to guess what they had said, for there was a peculiar sparkle in his eye, as he returned a haughty glance which Elmore now directed toward him.

The yells and shouts of the natives in pursuit were meanwhile heard; but as the rocks along this part of the shore rose like huge ramparts, the islanders could not get near enough to use their spears.

At length the boat entered the bay, in which lay anchored the Bremen schooner, but, as they approached it, Bolton did not once look toward his vessel. On the contrary, his gaze now was fixed on the distant sail, which Elmore had sighted and signaled, and which, growing larger every moment in the indistinct light, showed unequivocal signs of approaching the island.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOARD THE SCHOONER.

"BOAT ahoy!" came a hoarse hail from the schooner.

"Ay, ay, all right!" answered Bolton.

In a few minutes more the boat was alongside the schooner. Man-ropes were lowered in the gangway, when Bolton and Elmore seemed to vie with each other in their assiduity to assist Bertha up the side. She did not require much assistance, however, for so quick and light were her movements, that she ran nimbly up the steps, scarcely touching the young captain's proffered hand.

When all were on deck, Elmore glanced around him, with a seaman's critical eye.

Imperfect as was the light, he could see that the decks were clean and white, every ringbolt and bit of steel shining with careful polish, while the rigging was neatly coiled on the pins. To starboard and larboard, however, Elmore noticed what, in his estimation, deteriorated from the neatness of the vessel, and which made him smile as he reflected that this blemish was the natural result of that clumsiness peculiar to the Dutch, who usually prefer utility to symmetry. The blemish, in this instance, consisted in several objects—probably casks or barrels, Elmore thought—on each side of the deck, carefully covered with tarpaulins.

Bolton, noticing the direction of Elmore's glance, seemed to guess his thoughts.

"We Dutchmen," said he, laughing, "believe in making useful what we have. Our hold is so

crowded that I have thought these things had better be put up here."

Meanwhile the sounds of laughter and hoarse voices in conversation, borne up from the fore-castle, seemed to betoken a larger crew than might have been expected to be found aboard such a craft; for there were at least a dozen men besides, lounging about the forward deck, conversing in low voices.

"Come into my cabin," said Bolton.

The cabin was found to be rather large for so small a craft, and fitted up with an elegance that surprised Elmore. It contained a neat carpet of Brussels, a lounge, pictures, and other ornaments, and was divided into several apartments.

"If you please," said Elmore, "I would now like to see my man, Jib Junk."

"This way, then," said Bolton, leading the way through an apartment at one side of which was the pantry.

The young captain pressing a spring, the pantry—shelves and all—swung open, revealing an aperture in the bulkheads large enough to admit a human being, and through which came the usual smell of tarred ropes and bilge water.

"We are in the hold?" said Elmore, in surprise.

"Exactly."

He pulled down a lantern apparently from a hook on the inside of the bulkheads, and lighted it with a match taken from his pocket.

"Come on," he continued, and Elmore, surprised and angry, picked his way over coils of rope, through spars and canvas, close to the bulkheads forward, near which, bound hand and foot with light chains, lay Jib Junk, fast asleep.

"What does this mean?" inquired Elmore. "My man a prisoner?"

"Ay, ay. You see we were obliged to put him down here in this way to prevent him jumping overboard and swimming ashore, which he swore he would do, if we allowed him the liberty of the deck. Shall I wake him?"

"No, let him sleep," said Elmore. "I'll speak to him some other time."

They returned to the cabin, where Bertha and her father now sat in conversation, the former endeavoring to soothe her parent, who seemed completely broken down, and discouraged by the manner in which the natives had treated him.

"My mate," said Bolton to Bertha, "will give up his room for your accommodation. You will find it comfortable."

He went on deck, whither he was soon followed by Elmore, who was anxious to get another look at the approaching stranger.

Toward this craft Bolton had now leveled his night-glass. He had been in conversation with his tall mate, but on the appearance of Elmore, he abruptly ceased.

"What do you make of her?" inquired the lieutenant.

"Enough to persuade me that it were better my little schooner should give this island a wide berth," answered the other, laughing.

"Will you oblige me with the night-glass a moment?"

Bolton and his mate exchanged glances. The young captain seemed to hesitate about complying with the request made to him, but at length he reluctantly yielded the glass.

Elmore had not looked long when he passed the glass back to Bolton.

"You have no reason to flee," he said, emphatically. "I am pretty sure yonder craft, standing inshore, is my own vessel—the Dauntless."

"Are you?" said Bolton, dryly.

"Yes, sir. Had we not better make signals? I shall be glad enough to set foot on the deck of my stout craft once more."

"Doubtless, but it is not to be thought of!"

"How? What do you mean?"

"I dare say you are mistaken about that vessel," said Bolton, evasively. "In my opinion it is the pirate."

"I am quite sure I'm not mistaken," said Elmore. "But at all events, daylight will show."

"I shall not wait for daylight," said Bolton. "Call all hands," he added, to his mate, "to weigh anchor."

The mate passed the word, and, in a few moments, the decks forward were alive with stout fellows heaving away at the brakes.

Meanwhile Elmore, having endeavored to change the captain's resolution, walked the deck in deep chagrin at what he deemed needless caution on the part of the other.

The bay in which the schooner lay anchored had two outlets: one a narrow passage or strait

through a line of high rocks forming the outer boundary, and which projected far from the island into the sea, the other the broader opening between the further extremity of this rocky wall and a tongue of land opposite, extending diagonally and forming a long, rocky promontory of gradual descent toward the water. The rocks were so low where the vessel lay, that the approaching stranger was plainly visible, standing along toward the island, apparently under a cloud of canvas, and directly before the wind.

"We won't make much progress beating up," said Bolton's mate, in a low voice to the captain; "besides, the stranger is already nearly in range of us."

Bolton glanced quickly toward the strait.

"Ay, ay," said he, "we'll try that. I think we can get through, as we have a fair wind for it. We sounded it, you know, when we were here before."

"Ay, ay, sir."

He went forward, hurrying the men at their task. They worked with a will, but suddenly met with an obstruction—the anchor, when a-weigh, had got foul of a sunken rock.

The sailors tugged and strained, some of them joking, and others venting their impatience in fierce oaths.

Bolton, glancing forward, his brow darkened; he drew a pistol from his breast-pocket, and confronted the men.

"The first man of you who complains again, gets a bullet through his head. As little noise now as possible!"

Elmore was surprised at such strict discipline aboard a mere trading schooner. The men, however, stopped grumbling—not another rude exclamation was heard while they worked at the brakes.

Their exertions, however, to clear the anchor were vain, for at least half an hour, during which Elmore watched the approaching stranger keenly.

This vessel now being not two miles distant, booming along straight for the island bay, he was pretty sure she was his own craft, although of course, in the pale moonlight, even with the aid of a night-glass, he could not feel certain on this point.

The anchor at last lifted, the schooner's head was directed for the narrow strait, toward which, under her main and foretopsails, she now went rippling slowly along.

"Fortunate for us we didn't draw much water; otherwise we could not get through that shallow strait," said Bolton to his mate.

"As it is we'll go through easy enough."

"Ay, ay, I trust so."

Then Bolton sprang on the vessel's rail, and, holding on to the main shrouds, peered eagerly ahead.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "those dusky rascals have headed us off!"

"What do you mean, sir?" inquired the mate.

"Ay, it is so," he added, observing now a number of canoes, loaded with men, shoot out from among the rocks.

The natives had evidently worked rapidly, the moment the sounds aboard the schooner betokened that she was getting under weigh. They had manned their canoes, moored in an inlet near the narrow strait, and were now prepared to board the vessel, armed to the teeth, and bring their captain to such terms as they desired.

Bolton showed no uneasiness at this turn of affairs.

"Have you arms aboard?" inquired Elmore.

"A few," answered the other, laughing.

"You need many. If I mistake not, there are at least a hundred of those fellows."

"All right," answered the other, coolly.

"You shall see how I deal with them."

As the schooner drew near, the natives were seen working their light vessels, so as to be ready to dash alongside.

Bolton seemed on the point of giving some order to his mate, when he suddenly shrugged his shoulders, at the same time leaning eagerly forward, and peering toward the strait, in which the water was lighted by the rays of the full moon.

"Wear ship!" he said, in a clear, ringing voice that made every man jump, and surprised the mate.

"Captain," said the later, "beg pardon, but you know there's no need of our turning our backs to those black-skins."

"Wear ship!" repeated Bolton, sternly.

"Must I order twice?"

As he spoke, there was that in his aspect which caused the mate to shrink back, while he hastened to pass the command.

Round went the schooner, heading up now,

on the starboard tack, close-hauled, for the other and larger opening, thus bringing the stranger, heading toward her, not half a league distant, about four points off the lee bow.

The command being thus executed, the mate stood, looking quite puzzled, near his superior, as if expecting he would vouchsafe some explanation of this sudden changing of his course.

"Look sharp astern, there at that strait we are leaving and see what you can make out," said Bolton.

The mate did as requested.

"There's something dark there, sticking up out of the water."

"Do you guess what it is?"

"Upon my word I don't, although as well as I can see it looks like a ship's mast."

"Now look at the shore bordering the strait—do you miss anything?"

"By George, yes—there were two trees there!"

"Since cut down—the work of those fellows. The trees have fallen into the strait and the rascals have thus contrived to block our egress. They evidently thought we would not notice them until our good craft got entangled in the branches and should lay at their mercy."

"What do you intend doing, now?"

"There is only one thing I can do; to pass through the other opening."

The mate shrugged his shoulders, looking dubiously, meanwhile, at the approaching stranger.

"That vessel," said Elmore, "I feel pretty sure, is my craft. You have nothing to apprehend from her."

"That remains to be proved."

"What?"

"It remains to be proved that she is your craft," said Bolton, exchanging a glance with his mate and laughing.

Standing along on the starboard tack, under every thing she could carry, the schooner soon was so near the rocks that her captain was obliged to tack.

As he did so, and the vessel came round, the other craft bore about a point off his weather bow, not more than a mile distant.

Bolton and his mate were watching her closely, when a flash lighted her side, followed by a loud report, and a heavy shot came whizzing across the schooner's bow.

Elmore looked at Bolton, surprised that he did not heave to.

The young commander stood apright, sarcastic smile on his lip, and a mischievous sparkle in his eye.

"I know her, now," said Elmore; "she is my own vessel—the brig-of-war. Come, sir, you'd better heave to."

"Do you command here?" said Bolton, somewhat scornfully, "or do I?"

"I merely advised you," said Elmore: "if you wish to be blown out of water, I suppose I cannot help it. But I think you are mad, my man, to act as you do, under the very guns of that craft."

"I care little for her guns. In a short time, if my schooner behave herself, I hope to be where her guns cannot reach me."

Elmore was still more surprised.

"You are surely mad, to talk thus. Why you should run from yonder vessel is more than I can imagine."

The captain said something in a low voice to his mate, who went forward.

A moment later several stout fellows came and stood by one of the tarpaulin-covered objects beneath the bow.

"Lively, there!" sung out Bolton.

Scarcely had he spoken, when the tarpaulin was jerked aside, revealing a heavy ten-pounder, which was at once run through the port-hole opposite to which it stood.

"Better 'skin' them all!" cried Bolton, to his mate.

The result was that, the tarpaulins being all removed, three guns on each side of the schooner and one forward were disclosed.

"Fire!" shouted Bolton, sternly, and the gun nearest the bow belched forth its contents.

Elmore, watching the result of the shot, was surprised to see the jib-boom of the other craft, cut in twain, fall trailing into the water.

"A good shot, was it not?" said Bolton to the young lieutenant.

"You have deceived me," said Elmore, and as he spoke, his gaze wandered to the sturdy forms pouring up from the schooner's fore-castle.

"You are not what you stated—you are—"

"The Flying Wake," answered Bolton, calmly—"the pirate you are in search of."

"I thought so," said Elmore, coolly; "although I did not suspect it until five minutes since, as you have altered your paint."

A second report from the other vessel. A heavy shot came howling along, passing between the fore and mainmast, in dangerous proximity to the heads of the two young men.

"You perceive that, as I said, I am in the way of showing your vessel, if such she be, a clean pair of heels," said Bolton.

"I am not sure of that."

"You shall soon see for yourself."

He now gave the order to tack again, and in a minute the Flying Wake was shooting along out of the bay toward the open sea.

The pursuing vessel now also tacked, running along parallel with the schooner, plying her with an occasional shot, which, however, as is usual when a gun is fired in a head-wind, fell wide of the mark.

Elmore, knowing that his brig was not a fast sailer on a wind, feared now that the Flying Wake would escape, and he probably showed his disappointment in his face, for Bolton, laying a hand on his shoulder, said:

"Cheer up; perhaps your craft may have me in her clutches yet."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHASE.

SURPRISED by the firing they heard, Malden and Bertha now came on deck.

The missionary and his daughter both uttered an exclamation, on seeing the schooner's guns and the stout gunners stationed near several of them.

Elmore, advancing, soon explained all to the astonished Malden.

A moment later, Bolton joined the group, lifting his cap and bowing politely to Bertha.

"The cloven foot is revealed," he said smiling, "and I suppose the very sight of me now inspires Miss Malden with holy horror."

To this remark Bertha made no answer; but Elmore noticed that she looked grieved, and that tears had gathered in her eyes.

"Papal papa!" she cried, "what will become of us now! I thought we were in a safe place when we boarded this vessel."

"And safe you are," said Bolton. "See? we are fast leaving your craft where she can do us no harm," he added, pointing to the pursuing vessel.

"Young man," said the missionary, "I am surprised that you should have thus deceived us. I do not understand, either, why you should have so exerted yourself to save the lives of Lieutenant Elmore and his man, you being an outlaw and the very person those two were looking for."

Bolton smiled.

"It is best to be frank," said he. "That it was from no feeling of friendship for the two, you may be sure. No, my motive was to procure hostages, as it were—to get these two in my hands that, in case of my coming to close quarters with your vessel, which, with one broadside, could sink me, I would keep back their fire by putting the prisoners under the guns of their own craft!"

"What do you propose doing with us?"

"You and your daughter? I shall put you aboard the first merchant vessel I meet, bound to a civilized port. It was well for you I happened off your island. I have thus been enabled to save the lives of two persons, one of whom I would willingly die for!"

His dark, handsome eyes, as he spoke, shot a glance at Bertha, who, however, shunned it; although Elmore could not determine whether she was pleased or otherwise at the remark.

A shot from the pursuer now whizzing over the heads of the party, the pirate captain remarked that he thought the young girl had better go below.

Elmore also advised her to go, and accompanied her and her father to the companionway.

"Do not feel frightened," he said. "I feel confident that this man Bolton will neither harm you nor your father."

"But you," said Bertha, instinctively laying a hand on his arm, and speaking in a faltering voice—"he will certainly harm you?"

"I have no fear for myself," answered Elmore. "I would rather be aboard here than not, as I may yet contrive, in some way, though of course I see no chance at present, of getting possession of this craft."

He spoke in a low voice, and Bertha answered in the same tone:

"Would that you could, although he—Bolton—has thus far been kind to us. God keep you and guard you, sir, from harm!" she added, falteringly.

There was deep gratification to Elmore in

hearing the girl whom he loved thus show her concern for him. The eyes of the two met, and the lieutenant fancied he saw a shy response to his ardent glance in Bertha's soft eyes.

At that moment, however, looking up, the young girl and the lieutenant, at one and the same time, beheld Bolton, who stood near, watching them with a cold glance in his dark eyes, and a sneer on his lip.

Bertha at once descended through the companionway, followed by her father. Then the two young men stood looking at each other.

"We are rivals," said Bolton.

"I think not—at least, I do not believe Miss Malden ever gave you the least encouragement."

"Has she given you any?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"This is childish," said Bolton, laughing. "Here we stand talking as two children would do for the possession of a bag of marbles. No more of this. If I can make the young lady love me, I shall do so, and you, I suppose, will do the same. Your vessel is left well astern," he added, quickly changing the subject, while he pointed toward the brig.

"It is too true," replied Elmore; "but I hope she may yet come up with you."

Soon after the moon went down, and the pursuing craft was shrouded in gloom.

Elmore went below, and stretching himself upon a lounge, sunk into a deep slumber.

He was waked by the light of the sun streaming full on his face. He rose, and having performed his morning ablutions, by means of a basin and a large, well-filled pitcher of curious workmanship on a stand in a corner of the room, he went on deck.

Harmand was there, but not Bolton.

"Good-morning, sir," said the tall mate, or rather lieutenant, as he must now be called.

"I hope you passed a pleasant night."

"I slept well."

"The captain is doubtless still asleep."

"Asleep?" said Elmore, in surprise, "and a war-craft close on his heels."

"Not very close since daylight," answered Harmand, pointing to the brig only the tops of whose masts now were visible.

Elmore was much disappointed. He had hoped that, before morning the wind would change, so that the brig might be put before it, at which kind of sailing he knew few vessels of her size and class could equal her.

He glanced away toward the island, which was now a faint blue line abeam; then he looked up at the schooner's sails, to perceive that as yet there was no sign of a change of wind.

"Can I see my man, Junk?" he inquired of Harmand. "I suppose he has waked up, down there in the hold, by this time."

"You will not have to go in the hold to see him. There he is now, forward, among the men," said Harmand, pointing toward Jib, who was seated on the windlass-bit, looking disconsolately away toward the land.

"Jib—Jib," said Elmore, as the former saluted him by lifting his cap and ducking his head, "this is bad business."

"Ay, ay, sir, bad enough, and sorry I was, sir, to hear that these chaps had nabbed you, too; but there's one consoler," added Jib, as he smoothed the patch on his seat, "which consoler is that we are still alive and kicking."

"Had you any idea when you were taken aboard, that these fellows were pirates—the very ones we are after?"

"No, I hadn't; although"—glancing toward Harmand—"that chap *did* have a familiar look. I am sure now that he's the one what rid me of my starn-post," added Junk, "and which I hope yet I may be even with for that same."

"Pity you did not recognize him before."

"It is, sir; but why, sir, don't they string us up—that's the way of pirates, I always heard," said Junk, taking a chew of tobacco.

"They have their own plans."

Jib shrugged his square shoulders.

"They'll swing us up, yet; but I don't think they'll harm the lass—Miss Malden—nor her father."

"No, Jib, we may have a chance to get possession of this vessel."

"Sir?" cried the other, in surprise, "how can we do that? Sixty men to two."

"We must, at any rate, watch our chance. We will probably have none, but we must be ready for it, if it should come."

"Ay, sir, ready enough you'll find me. Since the loss of my starn-post, sir, I've longed for that time."

Just then, the second lieutenant, Mr. Beak, as if suspecting something, was seen drawing near the two speakers.

He frowned when he noticed how abruptly

they ceased talking. He had, from the first, wanted them both locked up some where, for, as he stated to Bolton, there was no knowing what mischief they might breed.

The truth was, that he had taken a dislike to Elmore from the moment he saw him. Of a cool, revengeful disposition, he was a stranger to human feeling, and, could he have had his own way, he would have hung the young man and Jib on the spot, to get rid of them.

Down in the cabin, having waked from a restless slumber, Bertha was now arranging her toilet as well as she could with the few articles she had brought away with her in a sachel.

Now and then, as she combed her long, bright hair, she would pause, as if musing on some subject, which, in spite of her present situation, was evidently not painful to her, for a smile would wreath the pretty lips, and the deep color mantle over cheeks, neck, and brow. A shy, half-mischievous look—a mere sparkle in her soft eyes, would have betokened to the experienced observer that her thoughts were of one of the opposite sex; but whether the person who thus pleasantly occupied her mind was Elmore or Bolton, it was difficult to determine.

Certainly it would not seem that a noble girl like Bertha could be favorably inclined toward a desperate young outlaw like the schooner's captain; still when it is considered that women, at all times, have been known to love such men, especially when the latter are of handsome, dashing appearance, it would not, after all, have been a matter of great surprise, if Bertha had loved the good-looking pirate.

The young girl had finished her toilet, and sat conversing with her father, who had entered, when there was a tap at the door, and the voice of the steward, announcing breakfast.

The captain had delicacy enough to give orders that his officers should not intrude on Bertha at meal times. He also kept away, so that she and her father were the only persons at the table, the steward standing at a respectful distance to be ready to administer to the wants of the guests when required.

After Bertha and her father had retired from the table to the apartment which had been assigned them, the captain and his officers, with Elmore, came down to breakfast.

The captain was civil and courteous to his prisoner, but there was in his manner a certain air of coldness and constraint, which, in fact, he had evinced since discovering that Elmore was a rival.

When the meal was finished, all went on deck.

Soon after, Malden having also gone up, Bertha was seated in the main cabin, looking thoughtfully through the window at the vessel's wake, when she heard a step and glanced up, to see Bolton.

He bowed to her; then, taking a chair by her side, he said:

"Miss Malden, I hope you slept well."

"Not very well," answered Bertha, blushing, and speaking in a faltering voice.

"I am sorry. I suppose you were hoping my enemy would overtake us."

"No, I wish to see no person harmed, although by the laws you deserve it."

"I know I deserve it," he answered.

"Then abandon your unlawful pursuits, go to your native land, and in future lead an honorable life."

She spoke with feeling, her frank eyes turned full on his face.

"Miss Malden," he said, taking her hand, which, however, she quietly withdrew, "if there were in store for me the hope of a happy future, I would do as you request, although no person can say that the captain of the Flying Wake has ever shed one drop of human blood, except in self-defense."

"In defense of what?" inquired Bertha.

"Well," said Bolton, coloring and smiling slightly, "in—in—defense of myself and crew."

"While engaged in plundering," put in Bertha.

"Oh, sir, do as I would have you. Become a good man, and give up this wild life. You spoke of a happy future. Surely the consciousness of doing right—try it and you will see—would give you all the happiness mortal could desire."

"No, not all!" said Bolton, fixing the gaze of his dark, burning eyes full on the young woman's face. "I would desire love!—a fair face and form ever at my side to cheer and encourage me on in the good work. That face and form—my beau ideal of all that is beautiful and lovely in womankind—is before me now. Tell me that you will be my companion—my wife—and I promise you that I will disband my crew and abandon the sort of life I am leading forever."

Bertha averted her face, a sad expression on her brow.

Then she again turned her frank eyes toward the captain, a sweet smile wreathing her lip, her hand extended.

"Mine! mine!" exclaimed Bolton. "You consent—you consent to be my wife. Oh!"

A crash was heard above, followed by a prolonged groan of agony.

Bolton sprung up, and rushing on deck, beheld his first officer, Harmand, struggling in the agonies of death.

He had gone aloft to take a look at the pursuing brig, but, while leaning forward, with one hand grasping a ratline on the top-gallant shrouds, the ratline had given way and he was precipitated to the deck.

"My brave lieutenant!" cried Bolton, raising the head of the dying man on an arm. Harmand opened his eyes, a faint smile hovered round his lips, then his head went back with a sudden jerk, and he was dead.

That afternoon, with the English colors wrapped around his form, the dead man was consigned to his last resting-place in the blue depths of the sea.

"There goes as good an officer as ever walked a deck," said Bolton, sorrowfully, as the waves closed over the remains.

Then he called his second officer, Beak, and informed him that henceforth he would be installed in the place of Harmand.

Beak bowed, a smile of exultation crossing his dark face.

Then he turned a fierce glance toward Elmore, who was not far distant.

"As first officer, I will now use all my endeavors to persuade the captain to hang that rascal," he muttered, as he walked forward to issue some order. "I hate his cursed naval uniform—I hate the man himself and all like him, who follow us, giving us no rest."

Bolton, on the contrary, now seemed very courteous and kind toward Elmore. His coldness had all vanished, and the young lieutenant was surprised by the change in his manner, as well as by the peculiar triumphant sparkle in his eye, for which he could not account.

"We have left your craft almost out of sight," he said to the young lieutenant.

"Yes."

"I wish she was quite, and I could sight a merchantman homeward bound."

"For plunder, I suppose."

"No, sir; my plundering days are over."

"What?"

"Of my present way of life I have become tired. I shall leave it forever, and henceforth become a respected citizen in some part of the world."

"I am surprised to hear you say so. What motive?"

"Ay, there it is," interrupted Bolton. "I have never before had a motive; now I have one."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I am only sorry that for what you have done, the law will still hold you accountable."

"I shall go where the law can not reach me, with Bertha Malden for my wife."

"Bertha Malden?" interrupted Elmore, starting as if a dagger had pierced him. "Bertha Malden your wife?"

"Ay, sir, my wife she has promised to be."

A deathly paleness overspread the face of the young lieutenant. But he controlled himself manfully, and changed the subject.

CHAPTER X. THE QUARREL.

By next morning, no sign of the brig was to be discovered.

"Now," said Bolton to Elmore, who stood on the quarter-deck, leaning against the lee-rail, "I am going to play your vessel a neat trick. While she is away off yonder, in the offing, somewhere, I will come about and stand on the opposite course, straight for the island we have left."

"Why go back to the island?"

"Because Malden has told me that a certain merchant captain's brig, when homeward bound, has, for some years, been in the habit of stopping there for water, at about this time. Aboard that brig I can put Bertha and her father, and take passage with them."

A shadow crossed Elmore's face at the mention of Bertha's name, but he quickly controlled himself, answering calmly:

"The natives will attack you; they will never forgive you for what you have done."

"True. The compact I entered into with them was, in fact, a more important one than you imagine. As you have discovered, my

craft is neither a merchantman nor a Dutchman, but a pirate, manned by Englishmen, most of whom have seen service in the English navy, and some of them in the army. Well, sir, I conceived the idea of making this island a sort of stronghold. I entered into a compact with the natives, which was this: I was to build a fort, mount guns, and man the fort with armed natives and sailors. The natives were to assist me in case I were attacked by men-of-war, and I in return promised to help them in their battles with the Feejees.

"Of course, all this is at an end, now, for they will never overlook my snatching you and Bertha from their clutches in the way I did. I shall not, therefore, anchor off the island, but shall merely lie 'off and on.'"

Bolton then issued the order for veering ship, which being done, the craft was headed directly for the island.

Elmore, leaning over the rail, gave himself up to his own gloomy reflections.

It is certainly hard for a young man to find the hopes which he had entertained regarding the only woman he had ever loved, suddenly destroyed.

What Elmore had heard from Bolton had been indeed a bitter blow to him.

"Henceforth," he thought, "I shall devote myself to my calling, and never allow a thought of love or woman to intrude on my mind; for what woman, save Bertha, could ever have satisfied me?"

"Fate is hard against me. It is plain I was never born to bask in the smiles of womankind. For me the ocean and the tempest—nothing more."

He heard steps behind, and turned, to see the missionary and his daughter come up on deck.

His glance met that of Bertha; she smiled, but the young man looked grave. He could not return that smile now.

Then a shadow fell on Bertha's face; she seemed surprised, the cold, grave manner in which Elmore bowed to her.

Soon Bolton came and conversed with the young girl.

Elmore watching him askance, noticed that his manner was cheerful and joyous—that of the accepted lover. He also noticed that Bertha, now and then, looked round toward him, with an expression on her face which puzzled him.

It was a wistful, earnest look, which had not Bolton told him of his acceptance as a lover, Elmore would have construed into a mute invitation for his company.

As it was, however, he deemed it the result of a sort of coy reluctance on her part to be seen by him thus conversing with her betrothed.

Gloomy and sad, he walked away amidships, where he stood watching the white water break about the vessel's side.

A light touch on his arm roused him from his reverie; he looked up to see Jib Junk.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Jib, "but—but—ay, now sir; I don't like to say it, for I know it is none of my business."

"What do you mean, Jib?—speak out."

Jib twisted and squirmed in a peculiar manner, meanwhile 'backing up' until the blue patch came in contact with the wet rail, when, making a wry face, he jerked out suddenly:

"Marlinspikes and bobstays! can't you see it, sir? That lass you are so sweet on, wants your company. She certainly does—I've been a-watchin' her!"

"Jib, you talk foolishly!"

"Beg pardon, sir. Jist you see how she makes the heel of her boot go up and down—a-tapping on the deck, as she looks toward you. Ay, ay, sir, that's the way them kind of creature's does when they want their man."

"You are mistaken, my man."

"A third time I beg your pardon, sir," said Jib, ducking his head, and at the same time giving the blue patch an emphatic slap. "I was in love once myself, and the name of my lass was Betsey Jane, do you see, which was a noble bouncer. When she wanted me, she used to tap the floor with her boot-heel, which, under sich inspiritin' effects of love as hern, sounded like a horse's hoof!"

"So you think that was a proof of her love?"

"Ay, sir, the louder them taps—the better; though, of course, a delicate lass like Miss Malden there can't tap as loud as Betsey Jane, which could lift a bushel-basket of clams, and which I've seen capsize a table just by knockin' her elbow against it."

"Why did not you marry her?"

"There was more'n one objection, sir," said Jib, straddling his legs, and with both hands pulling up the sack of the blue patch. "Sich being that, among t'other accomplishments in

the tapping line was the one not only of tappin', but also of being tapped in her 'mentals' from the beer barrel."

The lieutenant looking puzzled, Jib explained that Betsey Jane being a little too fond of her beer, would sometimes, in tapping the beer-barrel, get tapped herself—that is to say, lose her wits.

The young man now changed the subject, asking Jib how he 'got along' with the new forward.

"Pretty well, sir. There's one thing I like about 'em, which 'fortinitely,' was took from one of the marchantmen they robbed."

Miss Malden and her father having now descended into the cabin, Elmore was about walking aft, when Jib laid a hand on his arm.

"A word, sir. These fellows has overlooked one thing. The brig is in the offing."

"What?"

"Ay, sir, in the offing. Awhile ago, when the mist cleared off there a little, I saw the outline of that craft—a faint line like a thread, and I think it was the brig."

"You are sure none of the pirates have seen it?"

"Yes, sir; they would have sung out if they had."

"Where is it?"

"Way off there, astarn, right in the line of the main-mast. You'll see her, if you look sharp."

Elmore now walked aft, and without attracting attention, observed, after a long, almost painful inspection, the thread-like line of which Junk had spoken.

It gradually became fainter, as the mist, which had cleared, again began to gather in the offing, until it was no longer visible.

If it was the brig he had seen, Elmore doubted that the schooner had also been noted from her decks, and he looked forward to another lively chase.

As hour after hour passed, however, and the craft he had seen did not again appear in sight, he concluded that she was either not the brig, but some other vessel, or else that the schooner had escaped the attention of her look-outs.

Next morning the schooner was within a couple of leagues of the island, when Bolton, as he had said he should do, backed and filled, lying off and on.

All that day and the next, he continued off shore, meanwhile keeping a sharp look-out for the merchantman which Malden had said would soon visit the island.

The natives, in canoes, were occasionally seen, but the captain had no fear of their making an attack, and knew that if they should, he could easily keep them off with his guns.

Bertha, ever since the vessel arrived off the island, had kept her room.

She seemed very sad, and once her father, entering, had found her in tears.

He inquired the cause, but she seemed resolved not to explain.

On the morning of the third day, Mr. Malden having gone on deck, the young girl was seated in the main cabin, when Elmore, who had come down for a glass of water, entered.

Bertha looked up, and the glances of the two met; she looked bright and expectant, as if she thought he would speak to her, while he, merely lifting his cap, with a cold good-morning, passed on.

An expression of strange sadness clouded Bertha's face, and seeking her own apartment, she threw herself on a lounge, where, for a long time, she lay weeping and sobbing, as if her heart would break. "Sail, O!" was the cry which soon came wafted down from the mast-head to her ears.

She shuddered, and rose from the lounge.

"More fighting," she muttered; "and there may be bloodshed."

On deck, Bolton, Elmore and Malden, also the seamen forward, were intently scanning the stranger, which, under full sail, was booming along toward the island. Soon she was near enough for her hull to be descried.

She was painted yellow, and showed no ports.

"It is the merchant-brig," said Malden, "unless I am much mistaken."

The captain rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

The first lieutenant evidently mistook the cause of his joy.

"Ay, ay, sir," he said; "we may make a good haul out of that craft."

"No, sir," said Bolton; "we will not molest her."

The lieutenant looked surprised, when Bolton drew him apart and explained his intention of putting Malden and his daughter on board that craft, and of going with them.

"And leave the Flying Wake?" said the lieutenant, surprised.

"Yes, forever. I give her to you. If you choose to continue the life you have led with me, well and good; if not, you can sell the vessel and disband the crew."

The lieutenant looked both surprised and overjoyed.

As said, the Flying Wake was a beautiful vessel—one which any sailor would be glad to own and command.

Beak was resolved to retain her, after the departure of Bolton, and continue the life of a free rover, which was well suited to one of his temperament. Moreover, he had always been a great favorite with the men, who would doubtless be glad to accept him as their commander.

"And how about Elmore and that man of his?" he inquired, with an expression of fierce exultation. "You will leave them aboard?"

"No. They also shall take passage aboard the merchantman."

Beak looked disappointed, and endeavored to change this resolution of Bolton's.

The captain, however, was firm, for he was anxious to keep in the good graces of Bertha, who, he was sure, would not approve of his leaving his prisoners in the hands of the pirates.

Having exchanged a few more words with his first officer, Bolton descended into the cabin, hoping there to find Bertha, to whom he was desirous of communicating the appearance of the sail.

In fact, he was anxious to have speech with the young girl, whom, since his conversation several days before with her, on deck, he had scarcely seen.

But she was not present, and he went up disappointed.

A few minutes later, she entered the main cabin, in which she had not long been seated when Elmore entered.

He was about passing her as before, when she spoke.

"The war-vessel is again in sight, I believe? There will be fighting—perhaps bloodshed."

"No, Miss Malden, the vessel is a merchantman, aboard which it is Bolton's intention to put you and your father."

A cry of joy escaped the young woman, but the smile faded from her lips when she noticed the look of anguish which came over the face of the lieutenant.

"Are you not also pleased? Surely Bolton will also put you and your man aboard that vessel."

"I do not know, and care little," he answered, moodily.

"Why so?"

"Oh, Bertha—I mean Miss Malden—can you ask that?"

She looked surprised.

"Why should I not ask it?"

"Yes, it is right; it was wrong for me to speak as I did. May you be happy with Bolton."

"Sir!"

"I wish you well; it is all I can do, and God bless you."

He turned to depart, but the voice of the young girl detained him.

"You have said what has surprised me. I should like to know who told you."

"I said I hoped you would be happy with the man who is to be yours. I learned you were engaged from his own lips."

At that moment, Malden was heard calling, in an excited manner, on Elmore.

The young man hastened on deck, to discover that Jib Junk was engaged in a rough and tumble fight with a huge Welshman, forward.

Bolton being now aloft, intently watching the approaching vessel, knew nothing of what was going on below, for neither Jib Junk nor the Welshman said a word, while they battled, and the crew, that the combat might go on unobstructed by their captain's interference, were also careful to maintain strict silence. As to Beak, he never interfered in the pugilistic concerns of his men, but would often play the interested spectator, as he was doing now.

When Elmore came up the Welshman had received severe punishment, for, added to his great strength, Jib was as active and as supple as an eel. Both men fought with the most determined courage, until a well directed blow from Jib between the Welshman's eyes, so confused and stunned him that he no longer seemed inclined to continue the combat.

At this juncture a chum of the Welshman rushed at Jib and knocked him down.

"Ay, ay, now!" cried Jib, "that was a foul blow, as I wasn't prepared."

He sprang up, and "at it" they went, when

the other Welshman also sprung at Jib, so that now he was opposed to two. He picked up a handspike, and was about striking one of his adversaries on the head, when the other, the taller one, jumped behind him, caught him with both hands by the slack of the blue patch, and raised him boldly to throw him overboard.

Jib squirmed fiercely, kicking his short legs about wildly, in his efforts to free himself, which he would not have succeeded in doing but for Elmore, who, elbowing his way forward, caught the man by the throat with one hand, and with the other broke his hold.

"Overboard with him! overboard with the blasted navy sharks—both of 'em!" now was heard from the enraged pirates.

Beak did not offer to interfere, seeming rather to exult in the turn matters had taken, and Elmore and Jib found themselves surrounded by fifty enraged men, armed with daggers and pistols.

"We're certainly in a tight fix, sir," remarked Jib, smoothing the disarranged blue patch. "I'm sorry you interfered, though, at the same time, I'm thankful."

"Cut 'em to pieces! kill 'em! We want no sharks aboard here!" yelled the pirates, as they closed round the two.

CHAPTER XI.

UNEXPECTED.

It would have fared ill with Elmore and Jib, but for the appearance of Bolton, who, by the noise now made by his men, had perceived what was going on below.

Having descended from aloft, he rushed among them, drawn sword in hand, and compelled them to fall back.

The men, while they obeyed, however, grumbled and cast many dark glances at Elmore and Junk.

The captain now told the latter that he might take up his quarters, for the present, with the steward, who occupied a small room just forward of the cabin.

Again the men muttered among themselves, while Beak, looking dissatisfied, continued to say, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the men: "If I had my way I'd string 'em both up!"

Elmore now walked aft, and Jib stood amidships, to watch the approaching vessel.

Something in the appearance of the spars and sails seemed to rivet the attention of both sailors.

She was now less than a mile off, near enough to be well distinguished.

"Well, my friend, is she your vessel—the expected merchantman?" Bolton inquired of Malden.

"She looks like it, and yet she don't," he answered, puzzled. "Her masts and yards, somehow, don't look natural."

"Well, if she's not the one it can make no difference. You can board her, all the same."

He then went into the main cabin, this time to find Bertha there.

"Well," said he, "the merchantman is close aboard."

"I am glad to hear it."

"I shall accompany you," he went on, "and whether the vessel be bound home or not, may not our wedding take place at the first civilized port we reach?"

"Our wedding?" she said, drawing back.

"Yes, dear Bertha. Why this coy backwardness? Why may we not as soon as possible be united?"

"Upon my word, I don't understand you!" she exclaimed. "Surely, sir, you are in your right mind?"

"I am. You said you would be mine, the other day. Why this singular behavior, then?"

"Yours? No, sir—no."

"Then you have reconsidered, and are resolved to draw back. You would not wed an outlaw, though you do love him."

"No—no. What strange delusion is this? I do not love you. I never loved you; it is simply impossible!"

He drew himself up, his eyes flashing fire.

"Did you not promise, the other day, when I asked you, to be my wife—that is, you did the same thing—you held out to me, to take, the hand I asked for! Just then we were interrupted, but of course I supposed—"

"Enough," said Bertha, now perceiving the truth. "You fell into a serious error, if you supposed I intended giving you my hand as a pledge of becoming yours. The interruption was the cause of your making this mistake; but for that, as I gave you my hand, I would have said that I could never love you but that I would pray for your welfare and success, as a

friend might, in the good path you had chosen."

"So that was all!" he exclaimed bitterly and fiercely. "A mistake I have made, truly!"

"You will put my father and I aboard the merchantman—and—Elmore?"

"I will keep my word. You and your father shall be put aboard the merchant-brig—but not Elmore. He shall remain aboard my vessel."

"No—no; I beseech you let him go with us."

"I dare say you would like it," answered Bolton, smiling bitterly; "but it shall not be so."

With that he turned and went on deck.

The brig now was within half a mile of the schooner.

Elmore and Jib Junk were watching her intently, and now, unperceived by Bolton, they exchanged significant glances.

A few men, in rough Guernsey frocks, were leaning over the forward rail of the approaching craft. Aft, the captain, a tall fellow, in a rough monkey jacket, stood trumpet in hand.

Upon the latter both the gaze of Elmore and Jib Junk were riveted, and as the vessel drew yet nearer, they looked at each other in a peculiar manner.

The yellow brig now was almost within speaking-distance. Bolton had sprung upon a gun-slide; the approaching craft was within about thirty fathoms of the schooner, standing on, as if to cross her stern, when suddenly the young captain, leaning over, said something in a low voice to his first officer.

The latter started, his face for an instant turning ashy pale; then, like a shot, he darted forward, issuing his orders in a quick, low, stern voice.

In an instant, the men sprung to the braces, and then darting aft, Beak spoke in a low voice to the man at the wheel.

All at once, Bolton made a motion with his hand, when in an instant, the schooner fell off, away from the brig, with her yards squared bowling out to sea, like a frightened bird.

"Why did you do that?" inquired Elmore.

"You need not ask me, for you know well enough. The captain of a merchantman does not usually wear gilt buttons!"

"Ay," put in Beak, "the fool should have worn a looser jacket—one which wouldn't have partly burst open, as his has just done. A blind man could almost see those gilt buttons," he added, looking toward the captain of the brig.

Elmore now perceived that in fact, in raising his arm, several of the buttons on the monkey-jacket had given way, revealing the gilt ones of a blue navy-coat!

"Aho, there!" now came from the brig. "What are you doing? I want to speak to you."

"I'm too near the shore," answered Bolton, coolly, "there's a strong current here, and the natives are also troublesome on that island; so I want to give it a wide berth."

The captain, however, was not so easily deceived.

Open flew his ports, which were previously rendered invisible by the yellow paint, and the muzzles of half a dozen ugly-looking guns protruded through them.

"Heave to, or I'll sink you!" he thundered, in a voice familiar to Elmore and Jib Junk, who had long since recognized their own craft and captain, in spite of the yellow paint and the monkey jacket.

Beak looked at his commander, and shrugged his shoulders.

"We're in tight quarters, sir," said he. "What do you propose to do?"

Bolton drew himself up, with flashing eyes.

"Fight to the last!" he said, in a low, stern voice.

"There'll be music here, presently," said Jib Junk, softly stroking the blue patch, as he looked toward the speaker.

The young captain's face wore a dark, determined look. In fact, never before had such a feeling of perfect recklessness possessed him.

Bertha had refused him, and he cared little what might happen now, either to himself or his schooner.

"Ay, ay!" he responded, in answer to the brig's captain; "I suppose I can't do any better. I'll heave to, directly!"

He then said something in a low voice to Beak, and in a moment, his gunners had taken their places.

"Down with her mainmast!" he said, to his best man—a tall, broad-shouldered Hercules, who had for years served in the British navy.

"Now, Thompson, do your best!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Thompson, sighting his piece.

The gun thundered, there was a crash, and

over went the brig's mainmast, broken short off near the cap.

"Hooray! hooray!" yelled the pirates.

Mr. Malden, who, just previous to this, had gone below, now came running up, followed by his daughter.

"Miss Malden, I beg of you to stay below," said Elmore.

"But what does this mean?" she cried. "Ah! I understand," she added; "because I refused his love—because I could not love him—Bolton has resolved to break his word to father and I, and to attack the merchantman!"

A glow of pleasure swept across Elmore's face.

"It is not a merchantman," said he, "it is my own vessel, disguised by her captain, with a new coat of yellow paint, that he might steal up on his enemy."

"Oh, is that possible?"

"Yes; but you must go below."

She permitted him to assist her into the cabin. He seemed about returning on deck, then suddenly he paused.

"One word, Miss Malden. You have refused to be Bolton's wife?"

"Yes, oh, yes."

"He told me that you—"

"Yes, yes, I understand," she interrupted, "he made a mistake," and she hurriedly explained.

"Thank God!" cried Elmore, fervently, and without another word, he hurried on deck.

Bolton noticed the bright, happy expression of his face, and his brow darkened, as a suspicion of the cause crossed his mind.

Meanwhile, the schooner, under a press of canvas, was making good headway.

The mainmast having fallen, with some of its intricate hamper, lengthwise across the brig's deck, the movements of her crew were so seriously impeded that not a gun could be fired until the wreck was partially cleared away.

Another shot from the schooner, aimed at the brig's foremast, carried away the new jib-boom, which had been rigged in place of the one lost a few days before.

Bowling on, the schooner was about a quarter of a mile from the brig, ere the latter fired a shot. This shot, however, was well-aimed, carrying away the schooner's main-top-mast, which, with its topsail, fell directly on the vessel's deck, preventing some of the gunners from working.

Jib Junk here had a narrow escape, dodging to one side, barely in time to escape the yard. As it was, he was covered by the ponderous canvas of the topsail, under which, to release himself, he struggled manfully.

A part of the sail having got foul of the anchor, the men were obliged to cut it in different places, so as take it up piece by piece. Thus commencing to cut with a sharp knife through the center, one of the sailors heard the half-smothered voice of Jib.

"Look out, there! Avast, there, be careful!"

And up rose the blue patch through the opening made, followed by the person of its owner.

The captain of the schooner knew that if exposed to the brig's heavy guns, there would be but little chance of his escape. He, therefore, proceeded to make use of Elmore and Jib Junk, as he had intended to do, in case of such an emergency as the present.

The young officer and his man were both securely lashed to the main and fore rigging, within full sight of the brig's people, who, in fact, had previously recognized them, as they stood by the schooner's rail.

Although the face of the young officer could not now be seen distinctly at its present distance from the brig, by the latter's men, yet the uniform, with its gilt buttons, must at once have shown the captain that it was his lieutenant.

This had the desired effect; the captain of the brig would not fire upon his lieutenant, and Beak and Bolton exchanged triumphant glances.

At length, becoming tired of his cramped position, Jib Junk twisted himself so that he finally succeeded in turning his face inboard and his back to the sea. In this position the broad blue patch must have been visible to the brig's people, who, on seeing it, at once knew Jib by his 'colors.'

Bolton, meanwhile, proceeded to repair damages, and those of the schooner being slight in comparison with what the brig had sustained, the schooner had soon left her pursuer a league astern.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

ELMORE and Jib Junk were now cut down from the rigging. As they sprang to the deck, the eyes of first officer, Beak, and a group of

men with whom he had been conversing in low tones, were turned, with a savage expression, toward the two men.

"Mr. Beak—this way!" Bolton called, impatiently.

"Well, sir," said Beak, sullenly, as he walked aft.

"You'll be at hand in future to receive my orders," said the captain, angrily, "instead of talking with the foremast hands."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Beak, discontentedly.

All that day he scarcely spoke to Bolton. The turn affairs had taken in depriving him of what the captain had promised him—the command and ownership of the Flying Wake—had been to him a heavy blow, under which he could not help showing his chagrin and disappointment.

At night the captain ordered him to "veer ship," but the lieutenant was slow in issuing the order to the crew that Bolton, drawing his sword, advanced threateningly toward him.

"What's the matter, Beak? You must obey my orders better than this, if you value your life."

The lieutenant having shouted the command to veer to the crew, turned to the commander.

"Sir, you know what you promised us, and you know how it's turned out, and yet you say nothing as to when the promise will be fulfilled."

"It can never be," answered Bolton. "I have changed my mind, and concluded to continue the life of a rover!"

He then walked away from Beak, who from that moment, hated his young captain.

Meanwhile, the Flying Wake was again heading for the islands, Bolton's intention being to "double" on the brig, run in toward the shore, and then tack and stand along the eastward, which maneuver he judged would soon carry him far away from his pursuer.

When, however, as well as he could judge in the darkness, he was about a league from the island, the wind showed signs of dying away. It continued steadily decreasing, and toward morning Bolton found himself becalmed within a league of the island, and a dense fog coming from the eastward.

Glancing forward, he now beheld his lieutenant, whom he had scarcely seen through the night, conversing with a group of dark-looking fellows, whom he knew to be the most desperate among his crew.

Now and then these men would glance aft with a savage expression of countenance, which so excited the captain's ire, that, drawing his sword, he rushed forward, and ordering the men into the forecabin, he turned fiercely on Beak.

"What is this, sir! No mutiny. At the first sign I'll shoot you all down like so many dogs!"

"Who said any thing about mutiny?" inquired Beak, sullenly; "but I'll tell you what it is: my advice to you is to string up those two men, Elmore and Jib Junk, as soon as possible, if you want to keep in the good graces of your men. They were at me yesterday about it, and this morning they came again. They want those two men to swing, especially since that quarrel with Jib Junk, whose part you took. They can't forgive your interference."

"Forgive! Who asks them? By the heavens above, I'll shoot every one down as a dog, if he so much as hints at opposing my orders."

Beak shrugged his shoulders and walked aft, Bolton following.

The two were not long there, when a low murmur like distant thunder was heard, and up came all hands, armed to the teeth, marching to the quarter-deck.

The gigantic Welshman, Harding, headed the party.

"Well?" said Bolton, sneeringly, as they confronted him.

"We want you to hang those two men!" said Harding, pointing to Elmore and Jib Junk, who stood not far off.

"You want me!" said Bolton.

Quick as thought he then drew a pistol and discharged it.

The bullet crashed through the skull of the Welshman, who stretched his gigantic length on the deck.

At this there was a howl of rage from all hands. Knives and pistols were drawn, and the men advanced threateningly toward the captain.

The latter looked toward Beak, expecting his support, but the treacherous first officer now put himself at the head of the men amid the most deafening yells and cheers from the pirates.

"Beak's our man—ay, Beak will hang the knaves for us!" shouted one.

At the same moment the crack of a pistol was heard, and the captain fell with a bullet in his heart!

"Who fired that shot?" cried Beak, with pretended anger.

His exultation, however, was so visible in his eyes, that the man who had fired boldly advanced.

"You were too rash!" said Beak.

"Perhaps I was; but we all want you for our captain, and this makes you so."

"There is no help for it now," said Beak, "and from this moment I take command of the Flying Wake."

"You'll hang them two blue jackets for us?" cried one. "You told us this morning you would if you had command."

"Yes; they shall swing; you may depend on that."

"D'ye hear that, sir?" said Jib, giving his blue patch a rap that sounded like a musket-shot; "it's all up with us, sir; God bless our eyes!"

"I believe you're right," said Elmore, gravely.

He was a brave man, but he could not think upon his coming fate without a shudder. It seemed hard to die thus, with his own craft, which he and Jib had sighted in the offing, not five miles distant.

Toward the two men rushed the pirates, with fierce yells, and Elmore was soon deprived of his sword.

But Beak interposed.

"Not just yet," said he, pointing to the dead bodies on the deck. "We must launch these overboard!"

The pirates fell back, and at once proceeded to make preparations for the burial.

Soon the two bodies, with weights attached, were launched into the sea.

Then Beak gave his orders for the hanging of Elmore and Jib Junk. A rope was rove through a block lashed to the end of the main yard, and some of the men had already surrounded the two prisoners to lead them to the waist, when Beak's voice was heard ringing through the schooner:

"Avast there for the present! Down boats and get ready to tow the schooner. There's danger astern!"

In fact, so occupied had the men been with the mutiny, and afterward with their preparations for the execution of their prisoners, that they had not noticed a large number of canoes, filled with armed warriors, rapidly approaching to attack the vessel.

Now looking about them, they also perceived the brig about four miles distant, heading toward them, that vessel having the advantage of a good breeze, which had begun to wrinkle the sea, some distance beyond the spot where the schooner was becalmed.

"Let us hang the men first!—the hanging first!" shouted several of the sailors.

"Well, lively—lively, then!" exclaimed Beak.

Elmore was first dragged beneath the noose.

As the men were about putting it round his neck, however, it was noticed that the strands of the rope above were partially severed, so that it was doubtful if they would bear his weight.

"Another rope! reeve another rope!" was the cry.

At the same moment another cry was heard—the yells of the savages, rapidly approaching the schooner, and now less than half a mile distant.

"Can't wait, now!" cried Beak. "We must leave the two men in charge of a guard, while the rest of us tow. See!" he added, pointing toward the brig, "yonder craft is also nearing us, and it'll be at least half an hour before the breeze gets to this quarter."

The seamen obeyed.

Elmore and Jib Junk were left guarded by four armed men, while the rest proceeded to get down the boats.

"We won't be long! Not more than a quarter of an hour getting the schooner into the breeze. You can see it isn't more'n a mile off. Then, you can return and continue the hanging."

The four boats the schooner carried—two long boats and two quarter—were soon down and manned by all hands, except the four left to guard the prisoners, the helmsman, the steward and the cook.

One end of a line being then attached to the schooner's bow and the other to the stern boat, the order to pull was given.

The men laid to their oars with a will, and the schooner forged ahead.

Meanwhile the fog, which had been spreading since daybreak, now gathered about the schooner so thickly that those aboard could not

see two yards beyond their craft in any direction. Even the one nearest the bow, of the boats used for towing, was only partially visible.

"This is dry work," said one of the sailors on guard—"eh, Tom?"

"Ay, ay; I wouldn't mind having a swig at that jug, which the captain keeps in the pantry."

The mouths of the three watered. "Let's go below and have a horn. One thing is sure, we haven't had our taut yet, which Captain Bolton used to give us every morning."

It was therefore unanimously agreed that they should go down in the cabin and help themselves to liquor.

"But what will we do with the prisoners?" "Tie 'em up," said Bill, "and set the cook to watching 'em. We'll soon be up ourselves."

Elmore and Jib, with strong ropes, were secured to the rail. The cook, a short, burly African, was then told to keep an eye on them.

He rather sullenly promised he would; but when the three sailors had descended into the cabin, he continued working about his boilers, in which he was cooking his daily allowance of salt meat, without paying much attention to the two men.

The sailors having entered the cabin, met the steward.

"Well, what do you want?" said that worthy, angrily, seeing the men moving toward the pantry.

One answered that it was none of his business, another said they were after "that jug of whisky."

The steward barred the way to the pantry with his own person.

"My orders," said he, "were to admit nobody. You can't go to that pantry."

"Get out out of the way," said Bill, endeavoring to push him aside.

The man resisted and a struggle ensued, in which the steward knocked Bill down.

This so enraged the other, that, picking up a crowbar, he dealt the steward, on the head, a tremendous blow, which laid the man senseless at his feet.

The three went to the pantry, in which they found the jug of rum.

Of this they partook freely, and soon becoming intoxicated, they forgot all about the two prisoners on deck. Now and then, as they continued their drunken orgies, they would glance, in a stupid, half-bewildered manner, at the steward, who had not yet risen, until at last, their senses drowned in liquor, they fell, and sunk into the inebriate's slumber.

Between the two prisoners on deck a plan of escape had meanwhile been quickly formed. In their haste to taste the rum, the three sailors had not fastened the ropes as securely as they might have done. Still, had not Junk possessed a good jack-knife in the inside pocket of his jacket, they might not have succeeded in freeing themselves. As it was, Jib severed the ropes, while the cook's head was turned.

To spring on the cook, who, suddenly turning, discovered what they had done, to knock him senseless with a blow on the head from a hand-spike, ere he could utter the cry of alarm, which he was on the point of doing, was, with Jib Junk the work of a few moments, while Lieutenant Elmore directed his attention to the man at the helm.

Presenting at his head his pistol, which he had retained while aboard the vessel, he commanded the man to keep silence or he would send a bullet through his head. This he could not, in reality have done, the pistol being empty, but the helmsman, not knowing this, at once complied with his request, maintaining a strict silence.

The young man, then peering into the cabin, perceived the state of the drunkards, and also of the steward.

"Well, Jib," he said, returning to the side of his man, "it's all right aft. The drunkards are asleep, and as to the steward they have knocked him senseless near the pantry."

"That's all as it should be," said Jib, rubbing his blue patch, gleefully. "And now here we are just getting into the breeze, shall I cut yet?"

"Wait a moment."

They waited until the wind rattled the sails, when Elmore said, in a clear, low voice:

"Now, Jib, cut!"

In a moment Jib was over the bows, jack-knife in hand.

He just gave the line one blow, when it snapped in twain.

Elmore, now rushing aft, ordered the helmsman to keep off.

The man obeyed, when the schooner's bows fell away from the boats.

"Now, Jib!"

The active tar was soon by the lieutenant's side, helping him square in the yards a little.

"Steady as you go!" ordered Elmore, sternly to the helmsman.

The man looked sullen, but the uplifted pistol frightened him into compliance.

The shouts and yells of the boat's crew, who, by this time, probably suspected something wrong, although, in the dense fog, they could not see aboard the schooner, were now heard. Elmore, darting aft, looked astern and listened.

He could just make out the dim outline of the foremost boat, which, becoming gradually more distinct, convinced him that either the fog was clearing or that the pursuers gained.

But, as the schooner gathered headway in the freshening wind, the boat was dropped further astern, and was soon entirely lost in the fog, while the shouts of the men and officers became fainter.

"All right!" cried Jib, exultingly, dancing a hornpipe about the deck.

Leaving him on deck, Elmore now went below and deprived the pirates of their arms, consisting of daggers and pistols. As they might wake and come to their senses before he should wish this to happen, the lieutenant, with the assistance of Jib, tied their hands and feet securely with stout ropes.

The cook was served in the same manner, after which Elmore prepared to descend again into the cabin, to inform Bertha and her father, whom Beak had locked in their room, of what he had done.

On second thoughts, however, he concluded he would wait until the fog should clear, and he should have made certain of his escape; for chance might yet again put the vessel in possession of the pirates; a sudden calm—even a change of wind having power to bring about this result.

So, keeping his eye on the helmsman, Elmore watched and waited.

In about an hour the fog showed signs of clearing. Gradually it lifted, rolling away, like a curtain, to the horizon; when, procuring a spy-glass, the young man directed it first toward the boats, which he could see now, mere specks, far astern.

Then he looked for the brig, toward which his present course, he was confident, must have carried him.

Of this vessel he could at first see nothing, but, as the fog rolled yet further back, he beheld her white sails, not three miles off!

This sight was so inspiring that Jib, who also beheld it, at once took off his cap, and gave three lusty cheers.

A blue signal-cloth being found, it was attached to the halliards, and moved rapidly up and down.

Elmore, pointing his glass, perceiving the signal was answered, kept on his course, calculating he would be within speaking distance of the brig, which bore directly ahead, in less than an hour.

He therefore conveyed the good news—explaining all—to Malden and Bertha.

"God be praised!" ejaculated both, simultaneously; "but we are fastened in and can't get out to see the welcome sight of your brig, unless you break down the door," added Malden.

"That I will do," answered Elmore, and procuring an ax, he soon opened the door.

As they passed through the cabin the lieutenant kept between Bertha and the steward, that she might not see the senseless form.

They went on deck, when Elmore pointed out to his companions the brig, plainly visible, not three miles ahead.

He then showed them the pirates' boats, now resembling black dots, far astern, and also the canoes of the natives in-shore, scarcely discernible.

Bertha's face lighted with joy; her eyes glowed, and the roses, which had lately faded somewhat from her smooth, round cheeks, reappeared.

Malden, who had been watching askance the admiration depicted on the face of Elmore, now, with a covert smile, walked over to the other side of the deck, leaving the young people by themselves.

Elmore drew near his fair companion.

"Bertha!" he said, gently.

She looked up, blushing deeply, and Elmore beheld in her soft eyes a shy response to his ardent glance.

"Bertha," he continued, "before we go aboard yonder vessel, will you tell me what you would say if—I informed you that I loved you?"

"If?" she murmured, smiling, archly; "that is not to say you do?"

"That I mean—I do love you, with my whole soul! Now what is your answer? Will you be my wife?"

"Yes," she answered, her little hand gliding into his.

They were standing by the mainmast, the cabin screening them from the gaze of the man at the wheel, and from Jib Junk, who stood near him.

Elmore, taking advantage of the opportunity, put an arm about Bertha's round, supple waist, and upon her lips impressed the betrothal kiss.

Ere he could withdraw his head, Malden, who had been leaning over the rail, turned and "caught the young man in the act."

"Humph—verily, now, what means this?" he said, solemnly.

"It means that I have obtained two prizes," answered Elmore; "this schooner and your daughter—the fairest craft of the two."

"You see, papa, I couldn't help it," said Bertha, hiding her blushing face on her father's bosom.

"Nor would I have wanted you to. I will marry you to him at once, for I know you are in a hurry," he added, with a sly smile.

"Oh, no!" said Bertha, coyly; "not in a hurry! How could you say that, papa?"

A form glided swiftly past the three people. It was Jib Junk, who, having emerged from behind the cabin, now knew what had taken place.

"Well," he muttered, his mouth stretched from ear to ear, "things is come to a crisis, now. It's all owing to the lieutenant's takin' my word about that heel-tappin'! I know'd she wanted him and he wanted her!"

He danced a sort of a jig about the deck, keeping time on the blue patch with resounding slaps.

Half an hour later the brig, crossing the schooner's stern, hove to. Elmore, from the quarter deck, made a brief explanation to his captain, who then lowered a boat and came aboard.

"Well, done!" he said, grasping the lieutenant's hand.

Full explanations followed, after which Malden and his daughter were taken aboard the brig, and assigned to comfortable quarters.

The steward, who was now up, the three pirates in the cabin, and the black cook, who had long since recovered his senses, were put in confinement in the brig's hold.

Leaving the schooner in charge of his lieutenant and half a dozen men, the captain then ran down for the pirates in the boats, who, soon captured, were all taken aboard, and being ironed, were confined between decks.

A suitable crew was then put aboard the schooner, which, with the brig, now stood for Honolulu for repairs.

Leaving the schooner at Honolulu, in charge of the American consul, the brig's captain, after his repairs were completed, stood away from the island, homeward bound. With him, now man and wife, he carried Bertha and Elmore, Mr. Malden accompanying them.

In due time they arrived in New York harbor, when Elmore, going ashore with his bride, purchased for their future home, a comfortable cottage on the Hudson.

A few months later, the pirates were tried, convicted and sentenced according to law.

"And now," said Malden, as, with his son-in-law, he left the court-room, "our troubles and trials, by the grace of God, are at last ended. Amen."

We have only to add that Elmore, after following the life of a sailor for a few years longer, received a profitable appointment, which enabled him to spend the half of every day at home, in the society of his beautiful, happy wife.

THE END.

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